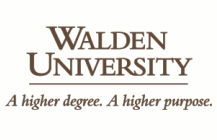

2019

Mentor Teacher Development During a Co-teaching Model of Student Teaching

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Jeanne M. DelColle

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Katherine Emmons, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Andrew Thomas, Committee Member, Education Faculty
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2019

Abstract

Mentor Teacher Development During a Co-teaching Model of Student Teaching

by

Jeanne M. DelColle

MA, Rutgers University- Camden, 2010

BA, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, 1993 &1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Leadership, Policy, and Change in Education

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

In a co-teaching model of student teaching, mentor teachers are presented with opportunities for professional growth because extensive collaboration occurs with the teacher candidate throughout the process. Despite the proliferation of co-teaching programs, mentor teachers often lack formal training for their role. Further, insufficient evidence fails to show how collaboration between mentor and candidate contributes to professional growth for the mentor. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine such growth in 9 mentor teachers who hosted teacher candidates during 1 semester of student teaching to determine how a co-teaching model affected mentor teachers' own teaching and mentoring skills. Professional growth was examined through Wenger's 4 components for situated learning. Research questions focused on mentor teachers' initial expectations about their roles, their identity and growth, and the application of their learning and growth when teaching. At the end of student teaching, mentor teachers participated in a series of 3 interviews based in phenomenological techniques. Their responses were coded using an inductive approach. Identified themes included mentor teacher experience, communities of practice, actions during student teaching, and mentor teachers' reflection on the role. Key findings were that all mentor teachers reported that they grew in practice, but not all developed their coaching and mentoring skills, and some focused on transmission of content and skills rather than candidate transformation. The findings of this study may influence positive social change to ensure that educator preparation assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning through mutually beneficial partnerships.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my many students over the years. As my “kids,” you have always inspired me to become the best version of myself and constantly remind me that I am both a student and a teacher.

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This doctoral journey has been one of perseverance. I could never have known so much in my life would change during the course of this endeavor and I would never have made it if it weren't for a few people who were able to remind me which direction I was supposed to go. To my Mom and brother Rob, thank you for understanding, cat-sitting, and reminding me to stop and smell the roses when necessary. I could not have gotten through the comedies and tragedies of life without you two.

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Most of all, thank you to the teachers who agreed to be participants in this study. Despite end-of-year exhaustion, you agreed to share your perspectives with me to help the next generation of teachers. Thank you for all you do.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Student teachers regard the student-teaching experience as the most important part of their preparation program (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). The student-teaching triad consists of (a) the student teacher, also known as the teacher candidate; (b) the mentor teacher, also known as the cooperating teacher; and (c) the college supervisor. In this triad, mentor teachers are often considered to have the most influence on the teacher candidate during student teaching because they serve as advisors and guides through everyday practices in the school setting (Clarke et al., 2014). However, educator-preparation programs (EPPs) and districts often fall short of adequately defining the mentor teacher's role, thereby making it difficult to identify and determine practitioners' suitability to serve in this critical role. In many cases, EPPs have little or no control over the selection of mentor teachers, who may be selected by district personnel because they have been identified as effective practitioners. The question of whether they are also skilled and competent mentors is never asked or answered (Ambrosetti, 2014; Ambrosetti, Knight, & Dekkers, 2014). A lack of training for teachers in these mentoring roles and a lack of communication and collaboration between EPPs and districts can lead to conflict about the type of guidance expected from the mentor teacher. In turn, this conflict leads to teacher candidate experiences that vary in quality within the same preparation program (Butler & Cuenca, 2012; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990).

A new model of student teaching, co-teaching, can help alleviate some problems associated with this variation in the quality of student-teaching experiences, while

providing opportunities for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate to benefit from the experience. Co-teaching training establishes a shared understanding of the skills and practices used in the classroom that exemplify quality instruction. Even without formal mentor training, the increased communication and collaboration required to successfully implement a co-teaching model could, in effect, help mentor teachers grow in their own practice and in the development of mentoring skills. Assessing the mentor teacher's conception of his or her role in a co-teaching model of student teaching and how it is carried out may provide insight into the reciprocal benefits possible in a mentor-candidate partnership. Developing a cohesive understanding of mentor teachers' role and development can help districts and EPPs look beyond the sole focus on teacher candidate growth and view the potential of the student-teaching experience as a professional development and teacher-leadership experience for the mentor teacher.

In this qualitative study, I used phenomenological methods to investigate the growth in practice and mentoring skills of mentor teachers who used a co-teaching model with their teacher candidates during a single-semester student-teaching experience. Chapter 1 includes sections on the study's background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance.

Background

Education does not occur in a vacuum but reflects the zeitgeist. Teacher preparation has many stakeholders, all of whom view the purpose of preparation programs through different lenses based on their political, social, and economic roles.

However, Zeichner, Payne, and Brayko (2015) noted that traditional teacher-preparation programs are “undemocratic” and fail to acknowledge the expertise available within schools and communities to inform teacher preparation (p. 123). This state of hierarchy in teacher education leads to a lack of mutual respect among participants in the preparation of teachers (Zeichner et al., 2015). When it comes to the mentor-candidate teaching team, the assumption is that the EPP is only responsible for the teacher candidate and not the mentor teacher’s professional development (Clarke et al., 2012). Clarke et al.’s (2014) meta-analysis of mentor teacher literature showed that the literature tends to concentrate on benefits gained by the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher’s participation and role during the student-teaching experience rather than on the mentor teacher’s professional development. Benefits for the mentor teacher have largely been unrealized by EPPs that are missing the opportunity to design a well-considered professional development experience in a mutually beneficial partnership (Clarke et al., 2014).

The selection, training, and compensation of mentors vary from state to state and program to program. In many cases, districts are left exclusively to select those who agree to serve as mentor teachers. Although districts must follow state requirements for mentor teacher eligibility, administrators have various reasons, including convenience and political advantage, for creating mentor teacher/teacher candidate pairs, some to the detriment of the teacher candidate (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011; Zeichner, 1996). Whether mentor teachers are appointed by administrators or they volunteer for the position is up to each district, leaving EPPs with little control over the matching process (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Tang & Choi, 2007).

Although many mentor teachers meet their state or district criteria for master teachers, they typically have mastered pedagogy and content but lack professional training in andragogy, coaching, mentoring, or supervision (Ambrosetti, 2014; Zeichner, 2002). This training is important because a power differential exists between mentor teachers and teacher candidates that could create an environment in which the transmission of knowledge or imitation is favored instead of the transformational knowledge development that allows teacher candidates to be reflective and develop their own styles (Anderson, 2007).

These effective teachers of children can struggle to be effective mentors without the knowledge and skills to teach other adults about teaching and reflecting on their practice (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014). In addition to a lack of mentoring knowledge and skills, a practitioner who is an accomplished teacher might struggle as a mentor because of the added stress that comes with the role. Such stress can include unmanageable workloads that upset the work-life balance and/or feelings of nervousness, threat, anxiety, or inadequacy, and isolation (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009).

Teacher preparation serves as the bond between P-12 districts and EPPs, but the roles each should play in training the next generation of teachers remain varied without intentional collaboration. In a traditional takeover model, the mentor teacher models effective practice as the teacher candidate watches and gradually assumes all the responsibilities for and duties in the classroom. As the teacher candidate gains more control over the classroom, the mentor teacher is expected to withdraw and allow the

teacher candidate to take over. Although this model has been the standard for years and can be successful, the risks inherent in it have caused parents and teachers alike to voice concerns about the quality of student learning with a teacher candidate in charge of the classroom while he or she is still learning how to teach (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010; Perl, Maughmer, & McQueen, 1999). In addition, increased accountability measures imposed on administrators and teachers from the federal and state levels, beginning with No Child Left Behind during the Bush era, laid out serious penalties if students did not meet basic proficiencies, regardless of whether a teacher candidate was in charge. These measures resulted in districts' increased resistance to work with teacher candidates. Teachers were reluctant to turn over their classes for an extended period and retreat into the background while the teacher candidate learned how to teach in the traditional model, because the mentor teacher was still held accountable for students' learning and test scores (Bacharach et al., 2010).

In the traditional model of student teaching, the "sink or swim" (Butler & Cuenca, 2012, p. 297) version of learning to teach in which effective teaching is "caught rather than taught" (Zeichner, 1996, p. 127) is problematic if the goal of the student-teaching experience is to create reflective practitioners. The dearth of supports in mentoring and supervision offers few alternatives to repeating the traditional practice of immersing teacher candidates in teaching practice without adequate guidance or modeling as the mentor teacher retreats and the teacher candidate takes over the teaching schedule. Although this traditional takeover model may help the teacher candidate develop day-to-day survival skills, it also contributes to feelings of isolation (Johnson & Napper-Owen,

2011; Rikard & Veal, 1996). Additional studies have shown that these practices, combined with a lack of constructive feedback, may limit the effectiveness of reflective practice for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate, in turn limiting benefits for the P-12 students in a classroom (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Clarke et al., 2012).

To redesign the experience so it better prepares candidates for modern teaching challenges, preliminary research findings on an emerging partnership model of co-teaching suggest there is potential to improve learning systematically for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate (Bacharach et al., 2010; Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016; Sanchez, Roegman, & Goodwin, 2016). Although co-teaching has existed for many years, most notably between regular-education teachers and special-education teachers (Cook & Friend, 1995), co-teaching during student teaching emerged in response to education reforms on the P-12 level, including the adoption of new evaluation models and curricula, as well as increased accountability largely based on test scores.

The use of a co-teaching model in student teaching presents new opportunities for the growth of both the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher. Rather than having the mentor teacher recede into the background as the teacher candidate takes on more of the academic load as the lead teacher, in co-teaching, both the mentor teacher and teacher candidate work as partners for the duration of the student-teaching experience to co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess. This process does not mean both teachers teach every lesson together every day; rather, they take turns leading and assisting in teaching and planning. The mentor teacher’s constant modeling means he or she must make his or her own

practices more explicit to the teacher candidate and make internalized processes more visible (Bacharach et al., 2008). This communication about practice prompts the mentor teacher's reflection, which might not happen otherwise (Kerin & Murphy, 2015; Roth, Masciotra, & Boyd, 1999) and has implications for practical growth and the development of mentoring skills.

Co-teaching in student teaching shows promise for a few reasons. First, more democratic classrooms develop due to the increased sharing of information, less hierarchical structure, and more equal roles than the traditional model, especially where it concerns responsibility for planning, instructing, and assessing (Murphy & Martin, 2015; Zeichner et al., 2015). Second, the constant collaboration and communication required for successful co-teaching means teaching teams dive deeper into curriculum and assessment, usually to their students' benefit. Third, the teacher candidate sees high quality practices modeled throughout the student-teaching experience and has opportunities to ask questions that help in their own knowledge development. Finally, co-teaching presents opportunities for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate to grow professionally.

In co-teaching models of student teaching, mentor teachers and teacher candidates spend considerably more time together than in a traditional takeover model of student teaching as they co-plan and co-teach lessons and have increased opportunities to learn from each other as part of a community of practice (Bacharach et al., 2010). Bacharach et al. (2010) revealed that students in a cotaught classroom statistically outperformed both

their peers taught in classrooms with a teacher candidate in a traditional model and classrooms that had a teacher with no teacher candidate at all.

Although state standardized tests can demonstrate the effectiveness of co-teaching on student learning (Bacharach et al., 2010), it is difficult to assess the mentor teacher's professional growth and learning. Assessing the mentor teacher's perceptions of his or her role and how that role is carried out may further strengthen the reciprocal benefits possible in a mentor-candidate partnership. A longitudinal study by Clarke et al. (2012) examined the changing nature and substance of the mentor teacher's role and suggested that co-teaching with a teacher candidate might be a new way for mentor teachers to participate in teacher education while being engaged and supported. Although traditional apprenticeship models can be unproductive for knowledge development, participation in what Lave and Wenger (1991) described as a community of practice offers more growth opportunities for all participants. Identity is central to deep learning and the more a member wants to be respected as a central participant in the community of practice, the more he or she is motivated to learn (Collins, 2006).

Building on Lave and Wenger's (1991) idea of a community of practice, a community of learning promotes the idea that knowledge development is a collective endeavor (Collins, 2006). Through increased communication and collaboration, co-teaching promotes the idea of a community of learning. The mentor teacher's reflection on practice as a member of the community can give rise to cognitive dissonance, which results in his or her self-examination of regular practices and new knowledge development. Without the disequilibrium caused by cognitive dissonance, both teacher

candidates and mentor teachers can find themselves in a comfortable apprenticeship routine where the mentor teacher transmits skills and knowledge that the candidate is expected to reproduce to get through a lesson. Although this transmission model can be effective for covering information students in a class need to know, it does not promote much reflection or growth for either the teacher candidate or the mentor teacher.

Several theories suggest that examining mentor teacher growth as part of a community of practice has merit. Most learning that takes place during student teaching is not independent but is instead situated in social contexts (Anderson, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) laid the groundwork for collaborative learning with the notion that a child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) was enhanced by problem solving in school in partnership with other, more accomplished students. Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory broadened Vygotsky's ideas to include adults in a variety of settings, including work (Aubrey & Riley, 2016). For Wenger (1998), socially situated learning in a community of practice requires four components to demonstrate that social engagement results in knowing and learning: meaning, practice, community, and identity. Going beyond traditional models of apprenticeship where knowledge and skills are transmitted and the apprentice is expected to learn by doing, Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning also includes relationships and culture, thus requiring a community of practice (Aubrey & Riley, 2016). According to Wenger (1998), these communities of practice require a shared understanding of three characteristics: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire.

Co-teaching is a two-way process of interaction, with all participants learning from each other due to the collective actions required for co-planning and co-teaching. Clark, Byrnes, and Sudweeks (2015) discussed how mentor teachers' stronger support and social modeling in situated learning experiences led to higher levels of teacher candidate efficacy. Within a co-teaching model of student teaching, these theories contribute to the idea of mentor teacher growth because the increased collaboration and communication about meaning, practice, community, and identity during planning and teaching result in learning among all members of the community of practice. This study was needed because a cohesive understanding of mentor teachers' role and development could help districts and EPPs look beyond their sole focus on teacher candidate growth to the potential of the student teaching experience to be a professional development and teacher leadership experience for the mentor teacher.

Problem Statement

Research on the student-teaching experience has primarily focused on benefits for the teacher candidate (Hiebert, Morris, Berk, & Jansen, 2007; Lafferty, 2015; Sinclair, Dowson, & Thistleton-Martin, 2006; Thompson, Hagenah, Lohwasser, & Laxton, 2015) and not much on the benefits to mentor teachers, who are also critical to the experience. This is in part because of the mentor teacher's passive role in the traditional student-teaching model. This primary focus on the teacher candidate relegates developments in the mentor teacher's reflection, growth, and changes to practice to the status of an incidental byproduct of working with a student teacher. Co-teaching during student teaching provides opportunities for both the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher to

be active learners. Rather than neglect mentor teacher growth in practice and mentoring based on reflection, research is needed to explore the experience of mentoring a teacher candidate and investigate opportunities to enhance the practice, skills, and knowledge necessary for teacher leadership (Campbell & Brummett, 2007; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Graham, 2006). Neglecting to address mentor teacher development fails to consider the broader picture of education, the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships, and the connection between preparation and induction.

Insufficient collaboration exists between the district and EPPs in the selection of mentor teachers. A 2011 study of student teaching by Greenberg et al. investigated the EPP selection process for mentor teachers and noted that more than half of the 134 preparation programs in their study, representing approximately 10% of all programs, had relinquished control over the selection of mentor teachers to school or district personnel. In states such as Connecticut and New Jersey, EPPs have no control over the selection of mentor teachers because state law gives the school districts complete control over the process (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Although some studies examine the mentor teacher's role, Clarke et al. (2014) noted a gap in the research regarding the investigation of new opportunities to support and engage mentor teachers that might allow them to establish themselves as active participants in teacher education. A study focused on the growth of mentor teachers during a co-teaching student-teaching experience could fill that gap. Thus far, co-teaching studies have focused on student learning and the teacher candidates' reactions to the co-teaching model of student teaching rather than investigating the mentor teacher's

growth (Bacharach et al., 2010). An examination of mentor teachers' growth in practice and development of mentoring skills as they carry out their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching can help bridge the gap between preparation and induction by providing valuable information to both EPPs and districts about professional development and teacher leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the growth of nine mentor teachers who hosted candidates from a midwestern university during a single semester of student teaching to determine how a co-teaching model of student teaching impacted their teaching practice and mentoring skills. I investigated mentor teachers' growth through how they talked about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching to determine whether their relationships with teacher candidates resulted in the mentor teachers' use of transactional or transformational knowledge development. Wenger's (1998) four components for growth—meaning, practice, community, and identity—were applied to the mentor teachers' beliefs and actions. My intent was to explore mentor teachers' growth at the conclusion of the student-teaching experience to determine whether the enhanced communication and collaboration inherent in the co-teaching model led to their growth either in practice as teachers or development as mentors. The study was a qualitative phenomenology in which I focused on mentor teacher growth during a co-teaching model of student teaching.

Research Questions

The study was guided by three research questions related to mentor teachers' growth in practice and development of mentoring skills. The questions focused on the mentor teachers' situated learning in the community of practice that was formed in a co-teaching model of student teaching. Wenger (1998) noted that people participate in communities of practice in different ways and on different levels:

> For individuals, it means that learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. For communities it means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations members. For organizations, it means that learning is an issue of sustaining the interconnected communities of practice through which an organization knows what it knows and thus becomes effective and valuable as an organization. (pp. 7-8)

This examination of how mentor teachers talked about growth in their initial expectations of the student-teaching experience, their identity and growth in working with teacher candidates, and how that growth applied to the larger educational context addresses the various levels in which people participate in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

RQ1: How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

RQ2: How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

RQ3: How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The theoretical concepts that guided this study were Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated cognition theory and participation in a community of practice. Both concepts lent themselves to an examination of mentor teachers' growth in a co-teaching model of student teaching. In a traditional takeover model of student teaching, a mentor teacher is often present but does not participate in teaching the class while the teacher candidate takes over the class and learns to teach. The practice of teaching is often an apprenticeship model in which knowledge is transmitted and the teacher candidate is expected to mimic the mentor teacher. By contrast, a co-teaching model of student teaching requires the mentor teacher and teacher candidate to plan and teach together continually, allowing both to question, learn, and put into practice the skills and content knowledge they gain from each other. Both models require the teacher candidate to interact with his or her environment as a legitimate peripheral participant in a community of practice, but the constant collaboration and communication required for co-teaching provides different growth opportunities for the mentor teacher.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) ideas about situated learning, legitimate peripheral participation, and communities of practice drew on Vygotsky's earlier work on socially situated learning (Aubrey & Riley, 2016). In Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated cognition theory, content and skills are not abstract phenomena to be learned independently in a sterile setting but should be combined and applied through lived

practice to form knowledge. This situated learning phenomenon involves legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice. Legitimate peripheral participation describes how novices develop into experienced workers over time by gradually working their way into a system as they gain knowledge and skills. A community of practice is a group of people who share their individual knowledge and skills with the rest of the community while working toward a common interest or goal. The community of practice, which is based on the characteristics of mutual engagement (as participants support each other), joint enterprise (as participants share a collective understanding of their activities), and shared repertoire (as participants use common ways of behaving and communicating), develops as members interact, build trust with each other, and develop practices adopted in time (Wenger, 1998). Situated cognition requires a person to participate in learning to gain meaning, but his or her social engagement must be meaningful for learning to take place and for him or her to become a full member of the community of practice. Wenger noted that for socially situated learning to take place, social engagement must focus on four components: meaning, practice, community, and identity. I detail these components more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

In the case of student teaching using a co-teaching model, situated learning is a two-way process where both the teacher candidate and mentor teacher learn from each other and receive feedback from a supervisor while they teach, plan, and reflect together. Situated learning occurs in a community of practice where participants' transformation occurs through interactions and experiences in the sociocultural context (Driscoll, 2005). Student teaching provides the teacher candidate with an opportunity to participate in a

community of practice through a cognitive apprenticeship. The design of the co-teaching model promotes the mentor teacher's ongoing modeling and coaching to prompt the teacher candidate's reflection. Teacher candidates develop into full participants in the community of learning as they form relationships with other educators, administrators, and community members. Meanwhile, the mentor teachers become part of a larger community of practice as they form relationships with university personnel, supervisors, and occasionally other mentor teachers. The process of identity formation happens as participants work within communities of practice and experience engagement, imagination, and alignment (Sim, 2006). According to Wenger (1998), engagement is the mutual process of negotiated meaning, imagination is making connections between theory and practice across time and place, and alignment means coordinating efforts in a broader goal. Teacher candidates become teachers by learning and modeling the mentor teacher's practices, even as that mentor teacher deepens his or her own understanding of professional practice by sharing it with a novice. The experience of exploring, discussing, and reflecting helps both the mentor and the teacher candidate deepen their understanding of the parts that form the relationship between teaching and learning.

Nature of the Study

Mentoring a teacher candidate requires content knowledge, skill development, and deep reflection prompted by frequent communication and collaboration. Just as the mentor teacher asks questions to encourage the teacher candidate to reflect and problem solve through discussion, the mentor teacher might also benefit from the increased

communication used in a co-teaching model of student teaching to reflect on his or her role in the student-teaching experience.

In this qualitative study, I used phenomenological methods to analyze interviews of mentor teachers and examine how they talked about their practices as a teacher and mentor, as they related to Wenger's (1998) components of socially situated learning. A convenience sample was drawn from mentor teachers who were hosting candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching for a 16-week placement during a semester at an EPP at a midwestern state university, which will be known as MSU (a pseudonymous acronym) in this study.

The interviews explored how mentor teachers talked about their own practices related to mentoring teacher candidates in a co-teaching model, especially in terms of meaning, practice, community, and identity. I conducted a three-part interview series with each participant, with approximately 1 week between each part (Seidman, 2013). Lave and Wenger (1991) noted that full participation in a community of practice is not about learning *from* talk but learning *to* talk as participants construct knowledge through practice. Wenger (1998) cited four components required for socially situated learning: meaning, practice, community, and identity. These four components also served as themes that guided the coding of interview data in my study. Themes that arose both across specific questions and across the interviews in general were identified, as were categories within the themes emerging from connecting threads and patterns contained in the data. A concept that emerged during the interviews and was not mentioned in the literature was the idea of how learning and insight gained outside the field of education

and the mentor teacher's community of practice was adapted and used to enhance socially situated learning. Another concept missing from the literature was the idea of how mentor teachers' learning impacted their communities of practice.

Definitions

Teacher education has changed through the years as teacher preparation has moved from "normal schools" to university settings. As new iterations of teacher preparation develop to meet districts' and EPPs' changing regulations and needs, the terms defining the roles have evolved (Clarke et al., 2014).

Co-teaching: One of the earliest definitions of co-teaching as student teaching is "a student teacher and a cooperating teacher working together with groups of students and sharing the delivery of instruction and physical space" (Perl et al., 1999, p. 7). However, Heck, Bacharach, Mann, and Ofstedal (2005) define co-teaching more specifically as "two teachers (a cooperating teacher and a teacher candidate) working together with groups of students; sharing the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space" (n.p.) as cited in Bacharach et al. (2010). Although *co-teaching* can also be found in early literature on the topic spelled as *co teaching* or *coteaching*, after a search in Google Scholar, *co-teaching* and *co teaching* are the spellings used most frequently in academic literature. In recent literature from the past five years, *co-teaching* is used most frequently. In order to maintain continuity with other recent scholarship *co-teaching* is the spelling of choice for this study.

Mentor teacher: Also known as a *cooperating teacher* and the *teacher of record* in the classroom. The term *cooperating teacher* emerged as teacher preparation moved

from normal schools to university settings. University faculty believed they had a "superior capacity to prepare teachers" (Cornbleth & Ellsworth, 1994, p. 63) and it was the practitioner's job simply to step aside and cooperate with the university program. This was largely the case in the traditional takeover model, when teachers were expected to turn over their classrooms to a novice teacher. In the 1980s, there was a growing criticism of university-based EPPs, and as accountability measures for districts and teachers increased, the cooperating teacher's role changed. Led by the Professional Development Schools movement, teachers were encouraged to stay in the classroom and work with the candidates (Clarke et al., 2014). Policy changes meant that many teachers were not allowed to leave the classroom and were expected to take on additional roles to mentor and coach these teacher candidates.

Teacher candidate: Also known as a *clinical intern, preservice teacher,* or *student teacher*. Because the term *student teacher* provokes negative associations under the traditional model, the term was updated to *teacher candidate* and used by programs that seek more collaboration and communication in the classroom (Bacharach et al., 2008, 2010).

Student teaching: The final clinical experience for most teacher-preparation candidates that takes place generally during a single semester. The length of the experience varies from state to state (Greenberg et al., 2011).

Assumptions

I operated on the basis that the following assumptions, were true, but could not be demonstrated:

1. EPPs and districts place teacher candidates with an expectation of successful and positive outcomes.
2. After completing training on how to co-teach provided by the EPP, the teaching team will use a co-teaching model with fidelity throughout the experience.

Scope and Delimitations

Participants of this study were mentor teachers hosting teacher candidates in a single semester, 16-week co-teaching student-teaching placement at a midwestern university's EPP. This structure restricted the study in terms of geography and was not generalizable to the larger population of mentor teachers nationwide. In my focus on the challenges, motivations, and professional growth of mentor teachers who volunteered to participate in the study, I did not consider other personal or professional factors, such as illness, that may have influenced their experiences. I examined mentor teachers who worked with one student teacher in one certification area for the entire 16 weeks, excluding others because some teacher candidates had dual-certification areas that required multiple placements for shorter periods.

Limitations

Several limitations served as potential weaknesses of this study and were outside my control. One limitation was the timing between interviews. It was important to space the interviews enough that the participants could think about the previous interviews without losing the connection between interviews. Using a three-interview process also

meant that questions from one interview might prompt reflection that would not have happened otherwise.

Another limitation was the fidelity with which the teaching teams used co-teaching. Although training was available for the teaching teams, actual co-teaching practices may have differed, with some teaching teams using co-teaching only at the beginning of the experience. Other teaching teams might have suffered from a power differential where the mentor teacher assumed the lead role for the duration of the experience rather than collaborating on co-planning and co-teaching. There was also the possibility that the mentor teachers who volunteered to interview did so because they had high levels of motivation, were looking for a challenge, and/or sought professional growth.

The trustworthiness that I established with participants during the study's qualitative phase was important because this rapport could have affected their responses throughout the three interviews. As the interviewer, I needed to remain aware of and control for my own facial expressions and body language, particularly when it came to the second round of interviews relating to mentor teachers' relationships with others at their school. It was important to ensure that my personal experiences as a mentor teacher and as someone who works in an EPP with teacher candidates did not influence my interpretation of the data. My personal opinions are irrelevant, so I had to remain neutral during the interview process. If the participants believed that they were being judged or that their responses would not remain confidential, they might not have been forthcoming with their answers.

Significance

This study contributes valuable information about growth opportunities for mentor teachers in a co-teaching model of student teaching. At a time when districts continue to lose funding and professional development efforts strain to catch practitioners' attention, reflection that improves practice and learning how to coach and mentor a teacher candidate can provide valuable knowledge and skills for mentor teachers in the comfort of their own classrooms. The knowledge and skills a mentor teacher gains are transferrable and can be applied to working with a novice teacher, with colleagues in professional learning communities, or as a peer mentor. At a time when up to 50% of new teachers leave the profession in the first 5 years (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), effective mentoring is crucial for success. Although it is generally acknowledged that mentor teachers can teach, it is not known how effective they are as mentors.

EPPs seeking national accreditation from the Council of Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) must also demonstrate under Standard 2 for clinical preparation and partnerships how they co select, prepare, evaluate, support, and retain high-quality educators (CAEP, 2013). This standard aims higher than a cooperating teacher who steps aside and lets the candidate take over the classroom, seeking instead a mentor teacher who guides reflection, models effective practice, and collaborates with the teacher candidate. Currently, the EPP and teacher candidate gain the most from this relationship, while districts, which are already taxed by budget constraints and scheduling, gain the least. Mentor teachers are paid relatively small stipends for taking on the time-consuming task of mentoring a teacher candidate daily. For this relationship to

balance in terms of a cost-effective analysis some EPPs provide supports to the mentor teacher as he or she guides the teacher candidate from theory to practice to offset the imbalance. This study could provide additional insight for those EPPs, as well as inspiration for other EPPs to undertake similar efforts.

Getting to the root of how mentor teachers conceive and carry out their role during a co-teaching student-teaching experience provides a potentially valuable level of data when considering outcomes for all a teaching team's stakeholders. If EPPs want to strengthen foundations for their teacher candidates, looking beyond a teacher candidate's growth to examine the mentor teacher's role in the teaching team might provide the data needed to aid in the development of in-service teachers and ensure mutually beneficial partnerships. Working with mentor teachers to clearly define their roles and ensure they have proper training and supports to serve as such will help teacher candidates see what continual growth looks like in action and provide a firm foundation in reflective, collaborative practice.

Summary

My purpose in this study was to examine the perceptions of mentor teachers hosting a candidate for a 16-week student-teaching experience in a co-teaching model of student teaching at a midwestern state university, as well as to identify the extent to which those perceptions affected the mentor teacher's professional during the experience. The study identified a convenience sample of mentor teachers and dug deeper into the mentor-teacher experience through phenomenological case studies.

Chapter 2 includes a review of literature on the theoretical foundations of communities of practice and situated learning; mentor teacher roles, including growth and professional development; co-teaching in student teaching; and the selected qualitative design for this study. In Chapter 3, I explain the research methods that I used in this qualitative study. In Chapter 4, I provide an analysis of the study's results, and Chapter 5 consists of the implications and recommendations arising from the data analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Various studies have indicated that the student-teaching experience is one of the most important parts of preservice training and the mentor teacher relationship is the most influential part of that experience (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Clarke et al., 2014; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). Despite this acknowledgement, EPPs and districts often overlook the mentor's role to focus on two things: (a) the growth of the teacher candidate and (b) student learning in the classroom (Clarke et al., 2012). However, mentoring a preservice teacher requires a different skillset than teaching students in a classroom and can provide a unique learning opportunity for the mentor teacher (Jaspers et al., 2014). Co-teaching during the student-teaching experience has become a popular choice as teachers face increased accountability for student learning, regardless of whether they have a preservice student in the classroom (Bacharach et al., 2010). The increased communication and collaboration needed to plan and teach together in the co-teaching model could provide new opportunities for mentor teachers to become active participants in both the student-teaching process and their own professional growth (Clarke et al., 2014; Feiman-Nemser, 2012). My purpose in this study was to examine mentor teachers' beliefs prior to hosting a teacher candidate and to study mentor teachers' perceptions of growth during a co-teaching model of student teaching.

Currently, mentor teachers are paired with student teachers by P-12 building-level or school-district officials. EPPs and districts provide little, if any, training on the mentor teacher's role, and in the absence of this preparation, mentors default to the methods through which they were trained (Rikard & Veal, 1996; Valencia, Martin, Place, &

Grossman, 2009). In the absence of a common understanding of what mentoring is, mentor teachers perceive their roles in vastly different ways. EPPs seldom know why particular teachers volunteer or are selected by administration (Hall et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Tang & Choi, 2007). Effective teachers do not always make competent mentors because mentoring an adult requires a different skillset than teaching children (Knowles & Cole, 1996).

An examination of teachers' attitudes and beliefs about their role as mentor teachers and their growth during the student-teaching process provides valuable information to districts and EPPs about future professional-development opportunities. One model of student teaching, the co-teaching model, requires increased communication, reflection, and collaboration between the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate for successful implementation, and it could provide both a valuable form of professional development for the mentor teacher and information to assist with future mentor-candidate matching in the district. A concise review of the literature addresses the mentor teacher's role, mentor teachers in a co-teaching model of student teaching, andragogy and teacher learning, and mentor teachers' perceptions and attitudes of mentoring preservice teachers.

Literature Search Strategy

The following terms guided the search for peer-reviewed articles related to teachers and their perceptions of and growth in a co-teaching model of student teaching: *cooperating teacher training, cooperating teacher growth, mentor teacher training, mentor teacher growth, co-teaching and cooperating teacher, cooperating teacher,* and

mentor teacher. I used a keyword search within the Google Scholar database, connected to the Walden University and Stockton University libraries, using as many Boolean combinations as possible. I also used bibliographies from peer-reviewed articles central to the topic. In addition to the peer-reviewed articles, I searched for books referenced by those articles to acquire further knowledge on the topics identified for the study, particularly in the areas of teacher learning and learning theory.

Conceptual Framework

Teaching and learning are complex processes within student teaching that require both the teacher candidate and mentor teacher, despite their formal titles, to embrace their simultaneous roles as teacher and student throughout the experience. There has been a push toward more frequent and longer-term field experiences for teacher candidates because of the potential for development to occur during socially constructed and experiential learning (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2010; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010). The following theories and theorists support this view.

Background of Theorists and Concepts

Although several theorists discuss situated learning, this study focused on Lave and Wenger's (1991) work regarding situated learning, legitimate peripheral participation, and communities of practice. Through communities of practice, learners start off as legitimate peripheral participants until they acquire the knowledge and skills to fully participate in the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In co-teaching, the increased communication and collaboration required for successful co-planning, co-

teaching, and co-assessing must allow for new ideas that emerge during student teaching to become praxis so both parties expand their learning and development (Murphy, Scantlebury, & Milne, 2015).

To accomplish this dynamic of mutual knowledge development, a shift must also happen within the mentor teacher, who may be an expert in teaching students but not in working with adults (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Although he or she may understand the concepts and routines the teacher candidate must learn to become a practitioner, the mentor also learns in context as he or she coaches and mentors (Hudson, 2013). How the mentor teacher perceives, thinks, and acts is based on his or her own experiences as a learner (Lortie, 1975) and experiences with the teacher candidate (Gut, Beam, Henning, Cochran, & Knight, 2014). The student-teaching experience is part of a community of practice where all parties learn and change through their interactions with each other. Teacher candidates who start in a peripheral role as an apprentice in the classroom take on more of a central role as they demonstrate proficiency in their transformation from students to teachers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, the question has not been asked of what happens to the mentor teacher, who is already a central figure within the community of practice, as he or she shifts among roles as teacher, mentor, and instructional coach. In this study, I investigated mentor teachers' growth in their own teaching practice and mentoring skills through their work with student teachers in a co-teaching model.

Situated learning in education. Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of situated learning is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) idea of socially constructed learning.

Vygotsky posited that children could only learn so much independently; for knowledge development to happen in what the author called the zone of proximal development, problem-solving needed to happen in partnership with a more advanced peer, preferably in a school setting. Lave and Wenger (1991) agreed that learners develop knowledge through active participation in social activities rather than being passive learners, but it can happen at any age and in a number of formal or informal settings through a community of practice. For Lave and Wenger, an apprenticeship model in which someone learns by doing is not sufficient. Rather, situated learning is a sociocultural approach that focuses on relationships and culture as a part of the knowledge-development process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). For situated learning to take place, it is not enough to just only participate in a community of practice, but the participant must socially engage in a manner that demonstrates learning and knowing. The following components are required for socially situated learning to occur:

1. Meaning: A way of talking about our (changing) ability—individually or collectively—to experience our life and the world as meaningful.
2. Practice: A way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action.
3. Community: A way of talking about the social configurations in which enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognizable as competence.

4. Identity: A way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the contest of our communities. (Wenger, 1998, p. 5)

Putnam and Borko (2000) wrote that in situated learning, cognition is situated in a particular physical or social context, is social in nature, and is distributed among the people and tools needed for learning about the particular environment. Co-teaching provides a unique opportunity for situated knowledge construction because it is not an apprenticeship model, but a process that requires common goals, continual collaboration, and reflective communication to be successful.

Co-teaching utilizes a structure to advance mentoring beyond an apprentice role. When implemented with fidelity, co-teachers have common goals for the class and collaborate and communicate with each other through reflective dialogue to increase student learning (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). Co-teaching in student teaching is different from co-teaching between two certified teachers because there is a power differential between the teacher candidate and mentor teacher, placing them at different levels in the school hierarchy (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach et al., 2010; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). Thus, their learning and development occur on different levels particular to each person's role. Although knowledge about learning how to teach is not new for the mentor teacher, the process of reflecting and breaking down his or her own processes of planning, teaching, and assessing provides a unique learning opportunity to further cultivate existing practice and develop a new set of skills in coaching and mentoring (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015)). Student teaching facilitates

learning opportunities that emerge from socially constructed experiences to improve actions and outcomes (Korthagen, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

A question remains whether the collaborative effort required by both the mentor teacher and teacher candidate during co-teaching can overcome the obstacles to knowledge development for the mentor teacher, which might have more to do with a mentor teacher's individual preferences or the general school culture and climate (Kuusisaari, 2014; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012). Murphy et al. (2015) noted that knowledge development is less likely to happen unless both members of the teaching team and the larger learning community that provides resources and support center co-teaching on shared expertise and co-respect.

Learning in communities of practice. According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice are social learning systems that have three essential characteristics: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. In a co-teaching model of student teaching, mutual engagement happens as the mentor teacher and teacher candidate communicate and collaborate to support each other as they co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess (Bacharach & Heck, 2012; Bacharach et al., 2010). Joint enterprise, as described by Wenger (1998) as a mediated and collective understanding of the activities and purpose of a practice, happens in conjunction with the larger grade-level team and administration in the P-12 setting, as well as the student-teaching supervisor and preparation program personnel, as the team navigates the co-teaching model. This shared repertoire consists of the manners, tools, artifacts, and ways of behaving and

communicating that are acceptable to the community as the co-teaching team works toward shared goals (Wenger, 1998).

Potential exists for situated learning for both the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher in a co-teaching model of student teaching. Mentor teachers have the opportunity to both expand their practice as a teacher and improve their mentoring skills (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). A person's transition from periphery to core involves his or her aspirations, relationships, and actual transformation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2010). The learning community is there to enculturate the new member into the broader learning system and helps them navigate external factors that may be beyond the participant's control (Wenger, 1998). Chang and Hsu (2017) conducted a case study with a senior teacher who was initially resistant to change but entered a community of practice with university instructors and pre-service students. As the teacher's identity developed within the community, collaboration with the learning community resulted in the teacher willingly changing his or her teaching practice. Breen's (2015) qualitative study of nine teachers showed that within a community of practice, participants needed some prompting from more experienced practitioners to move from the ZPD where they were to grow through the process of situated engagement and negotiation. Young and MacPhail (2014) examined a teacher's transition into a mentoring and supervisory role as a mentor teacher in a traditional model of student teaching. Although situated in a community of practice, it was difficult for the mentor teachers to learn supervision skills because of a lack of support, resources, and common goals. In short, teachers lacked supports from the university and an understanding of the program's common goals.

Without training and a common goal, some mentor teachers never moved beyond peripheral participation in the community of practice and did not grow as mentors (Young & MacPhail, 2014). It is important for all members of the community of practice to have a common understanding of program goals. Although not every experience within a community of practice is positive, even when there is conflict, the participants can learn from each other how to navigate and negotiate in less-than-ideal circumstances (Dang, 2013).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables/Concepts

A study of mentor teachers' growth during a co-teaching model of student teaching brings together studies across several related areas of research, including the mentor teacher's role in student teaching, role in a co-teaching model, learning, and perceptions and attitudes about their role in the student-teaching experience. While these studies have focused on a particular concept, there is some natural overlap. For example, it is difficult to explain the mentor teacher's role in a co-teaching model of student teaching without first explaining what a mentor teacher's role is in a traditional takeover model. Likewise, it is difficult to discuss mentor teachers' perceptions without mentioning teacher learning. This study connected all four areas as it investigated mentor teachers' growth during a co-teaching model of student teaching.

Role of the Mentor Teacher

Although there is no doubt about the importance of the mentor teacher in the student teaching experience, few EPPs and districts adequately define the mentor teacher's role and expectations (Clarke, 2006). Although many EPPs use different

terminology, such as *supervising teacher, clinical educator,* or *mentor teacher,* in-service teachers who hosted teacher candidates have traditionally been called *cooperating teachers* (Clarke et al., 2014). As teacher preparation moved from normal schools to universities, higher-education faculty who had been ensconced in academia felt classroom teachers should simply defer to their superior knowledge of teacher preparation and expected these classroom teachers to cooperate with them (Clarke et al., 2014). The shift from the term *cooperating teacher* to *mentor teacher* signifies a shift in understanding the role of educator preparation programs (EPPs) (Clarke et al., 2014). Although this terminology shift occurred during the 1980s as university-based teacher-preparation programs started to develop stronger partnerships with districts, classroom teachers still saw their role as providing a place for preservice teachers to learn the practical aspects of teaching, rather than seeing themselves as coaches or mentors within their classrooms (Clarke et al., 2014). What was missing in many cases was a genuine conversation with cooperating teachers about their roles and the work of student teaching (Nielsen, Triggs, Clarke, & Collins, 2010).

In an extensive review of the literature, Clarke et al. (2014) noted that the common conception of cooperating teachers' role in student teaching took on one of three forms: classroom placeholder, supervisor of practice, or teacher educator. In their final analysis, the authors categorized the literature into 11 ways cooperating teachers participated in teacher education and their levels of participation. With all of these interpretations of the mentor teacher's role, it is important for EPPs and districts to share an understanding of the particular role mentor teachers should play.

Clarke et al. (2014) also recognized several existing practices that, while often done for logical reasons, had unintended consequences for teacher candidate and mentor teacher development. One of these practices has to do with teachers volunteering to become mentors. Teachers do not always volunteer for the right reasons, and even if they do, great teachers do not always make good mentors because mentoring an adult requires a different skillset than teaching children (Clarke et al., 2014; Knowles & Cole, 1996). Unfortunately, the selection policies for matching teacher candidates with classroom teachers seldom consider compatibility measures (Greenberg et al., 2011). In a set of case studies that paired teacher candidates in both weak and strong placements, Darling-Hammond (2014) cited work by LaBoskey and Richert (2002) that showed compatible placements are conducive to growth for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate. Unfortunately, the study showed that even teacher candidates with an otherwise solid grasp of practice can run into difficulty with knowledge development in a bad placement, particularly if it occurs early in the field experience.

Mimicking the mentor teacher's actions is another practice with unintended consequences. If a teacher candidate uses an apprentice model as the default mentoring model where the expectation is that the teacher candidate mimics the mentor teacher and adapts his or her practices rather than expanding his or her own agency to create new practices, knowledge transmission occurs instead of knowledge development (Clarke et al., 2014). The mentor teacher may feel he or she is helping by modeling practices and providing resources to enculturate the teacher candidate on how to run a foolproof classroom. However, the mentor teacher's role is more than one of modeling practice; it

also requires guiding the teacher candidate's reflection through dialogue and aiding in the development of agency to improve his or her own practice (Stanulis et al., 2018). Mentoring conversations that question practice are crucial for knowledge development because they allow the teacher candidate to reflect and question (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017), particularly if those conversations take the inquiry-based stance of educative mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Pylman, 2016; Stanulis et al., 2018).

The fine balance a mentor teacher must maintain as he or she focuses on both student learning and teacher candidate learning is another area with strong consequences for teacher candidates, especially in this age of accountability, where teachers' jobs might be in jeopardy if their students do not achieve sufficient scores on state assessments Jaspers et al. (2014) noted that dual loyalty can cause conflict for mentor teachers. The mentor teacher wants the teacher candidate to learn but also wants to protect his or her students from the mistakes the teacher candidate makes (Clarke et al., 2014). This conflict could result in creating an environment that is too structured and provides the teacher candidate with little autonomy and opportunity to learn from mistakes (Jaspers et al., 2014; Patrick, 2013). Clarke et al., (2012) noted that while this balance is good for students, the unintended consequence for the teacher candidate is that the teacher might not have the perspective to mentor effectively and provide guidance for reflection and constructive criticism.

Finally, the lack of preparation for classroom teachers to serve as mentors has many unintended consequences for the teacher candidate, mentor teacher, and students. Mena et al. (2017) focused on analyzing discourse between mentor teachers and teacher

candidates and discussed the importance of EPPs defining the mentoring role because learning to teach does not happen naturally by simple observation and modeling; rather, it requires guided inquiry and reflection. An untrained teacher acting in a mentoring capacity who does not understand the mentoring role might not effectively be able to discuss elements of their own practice (Jaspers et al., 2014). Without training, mentor teachers tend to observe and report what they see rather than inquire into practice (Clarke et al., 2014). Clarke et al. (2014) noted that this lack of reflection and inquiry create missed opportunities for both the classroom teacher and the teacher candidate to enhance their knowledge development. Similarly, a study by Hudson (2013) noted that the professional development of mentors allows them to take advantage of their own learning. After surveying 101 mentor teachers, Hudson (2013) concluded that mentor teachers without training did not have the knowledge to take particular mentoring actions, nor could they constructively critique their own teaching practice or that of their teacher candidate. Lafferty (2015) conducted a small quantitative study of cooperating teacher perceptions and found that most mentor teachers believed they were creating safe spaces for their teacher candidates to take risks. However, when Hall et al. (2008) explored cooperating teachers' responsibilities, they found that 73% of cooperating teachers cited providing emotional and professional support as part of their responsibilities, while only 8% cited constructive criticism and reflection. A similar study by Torrez and Krebs (2012) showed that 45% of participants believed their role was to provide a space for teacher candidates to practice teaching.

The role of mentor teacher can be ambiguous and might cause conflict if it is not well-defined, but defining it is difficult when even the researchers working with teacher-preparation programs do not agree. Anderson (2007) noted that conflict results when cooperating teachers become mentor teachers because mentor teachers' evaluations of teacher candidates create a confusing power differential. The author believed true mentors should not serve in an evaluative role because the teacher candidate's desire to achieve good grades can lead him or her to imitate and conform to practices rather than develop his or her own practice. In contrast, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) noted that mentoring a teacher candidate involves aspects of both mentoring and supervision. While the mentor teacher nurtures the teacher candidate's development by building rapport, he or she also supports, advises, models, and assesses the candidate's learning. The problem is that those who volunteer may not understand the complexities of the mentor teacher role.

Ambrosetti et al. (2014) noted that there are multiple definitions in the literature of what it means to mentor, but that same literature does not often provide detail about the mentor's roles. Ambrosetti et al.'s (2014) study showed that defining the nebulous concept of mentoring and providing specific knowledge about the mentoring process was beneficial to teacher candidates and mentor teachers. A common understanding of the mentor teacher's role is important if mentors and teacher candidates expect to participate in an exchange of knowledge and skills that lessens the power hierarchy typically existing between them (Ambrosetti et al., 2014).

Role of the Mentor Teacher in a Co-teaching Model of Student Teaching

The evolution of co-teaching as a model used in student teaching presents new opportunities to examine the mentor teacher's role. In a co-teaching model, the mentor teacher remains an active part of the classroom and must consistently collaborate and communicate to enact the model with fidelity. The interaction required to utilize a co-teaching model has the potential to lead to increased reflection by both the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher.

The evolution of co-teaching in student teaching. Co-teaching is not a new concept in education or to researchers and practitioners in the United States. In the 1960s, Trump (1966) proposed reorganizing schools using a team-teaching approach. English schools used a variation on team teaching (Warwick, 1976), but the goal was the same: to create student-centered classroom instruction. Although co-teaching was primarily used by general-education teachers from different subject areas who were paired up to teach cross-curricular classes, the model became popular because of the inclusion movement in special education, where special-needs students were mainstreamed into regular-education classes (Friend, Reising, & Cook, 1993). Even in the early days of co-teaching, collaboration, mutual goals, parity, shared resources, and accountability were emphasized.

There were concerns about how preservice students would work in a co-teaching model. Friend and Cook (1990) noted that preservice education emphasized the development of content and method used in isolation rather than in collaboration. Friend and Cook (1990) noted that preservice teachers were being set up to fail because they

were not being taught the skills they would need to work effectively with their colleagues or set realistic expectations for their own professional behavior. To some, if a teacher candidate was placed in an inclusion room to complete his or her student teaching, it was not considered co-teaching because it did not meet the definition of two fully certified teachers with mutual goals working together to co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess (Cook & Friend, 1995).

EPPs using a traditional student-teaching model began to feel pushback from districts. In the traditional takeover student-teaching model, the combination of the teacher candidate's inexperience with the frustration of cooperating teachers who had to hand over their classrooms caused teachers and parents to complain about the quality of education their students were receiving (Perl et al., 1999). At the same time, education reforms based on accountability and focused on student test scores made teachers hesitant to give up their classrooms for extended periods, particularly when student test scores were attributed to classroom teachers regardless of who might have been teaching (Bacharach et al., 2010).

Co-teaching became a popular form of student teaching for several reasons. Dynak, Whitten, and Dynak (1997) found co-teaching to be a useful way for student teachers to learn collaboration as they worked with special-education students. Another compelling reason to try the model was that student achievement was higher in a co-teaching setting (Walsh & Snyder, 1993), even when compared to a classroom with no teacher candidate (Bacharach et al., 2010; Hartnett, Weed, McCoy, Thiess, & Nickens, 2013). Teacher candidates benefitted because they were able to spend more time on their

feet teaching than their traditional takeover counterparts, while mentor teachers noted increased self-reflection about their own practices (Bacharach et al., 2010). Finally, the evidence that co-teaching was beneficial for teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and students in the classroom provided a compelling reason for the model's widespread adoption by state departments of education, as well as teacher-preparation programs (Bacharach et al., 2010; Hartnett et al., 2013; NCATE, 2010; Willis, 2013).

Although the primary focus in the research has been on the benefits to the teacher candidate and the students in the classroom, the mentor teacher also benefits from utilizing the co-teaching model. Stobaugh and Gichuru (2016) noted that through co-teaching, mentor teachers develop advanced collaboration dispositions and skills. Additional advantages for mentor teachers include professional growth through co-planning and enhanced energy for teaching (Bacharach, 2010; Morton & Birky, 2015). Through stronger partnerships with EPPs and P-12 districts, mentor teachers also have more opportunities for professional development (Stobaugh & Gichuru, 2016).

A changing role for mentor teachers. The dynamic of the mentor teacher/teacher candidate relationship in a co-teaching model is different from the traditional model. Compared to a traditional model of student teaching, co-teaching requires that the role of the classroom teacher shift from one of supervision and evaluation to one focused on coaching and mentoring (Guise, Habib, Thiessen, & Robbins, 2017). For co-teaching to be effective, the classroom teacher must do more than provide modeling and a classroom in which to practice; it requires active mentoring with the goal of negotiating meaning and developing understanding through reflection (Guise,

et al., 2017). In a mentoring relationship, the classroom teacher focuses on the teacher candidate's growth while developing his or her own practice (Valencia et al., 2009).

While co-teaching has proven beneficial, there are also challenges to its implementation. One challenge is gaining the classroom teacher's buy-in. If a teacher does not understand the model or thinks it does not prepare teacher candidates for the reality of the classroom, he or she might view the teacher candidate as a classroom assistant(Guise et al., 2017). If administrators do not understand how the model works and want to see the teacher working lecture-style with the class during observations and evaluations because that is what they consider teaching, teachers are less likely to try the model (Hartnett et al., 2013). Another challenge is the hierarchical structure of student teaching. The mentor teacher is the teacher of record and, although parity is desired, the mentor teacher is ultimately held accountable for students' achievement in the classroom (Goodwin, Roegman, & Reagan, 2016; Jaspers et al., 2014). Despite these challenges, multiple studies show that one of the biggest challenges to implementing the model successfully is time (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015; Guise, Thiessen et al., 2016). Time, or more precisely, the lack of time, becomes a significant factor for whether co-teaching will be successful. The teaching team needs dedicated time to co-plan and engage in co-reflective dialogue (Heckert, Strieker, & Shaheen, 2013; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011). Both teachers must also have training so they understand co-teaching (Kinne, Ryan, & Faulkner, 2016; Parker, McHatton, Allen, & Rosa, 2010). Finally, there must be co-respect and co-responsibility (Guise, Habib, et al., 2016; Guise et al., 2017), as well as compatibility (Parker et al., 2010) for the co-teaching model to be effective.

Co-teaching as professional development. Communities of practice provide a space for mentor teachers and teacher candidates to engage with each other and other teachers about the subject they teach. The collaboration and communication needed to make co-teaching successful require that teachers do not operate in isolation. However, the idea of working with colleagues and being vulnerable enough to admit there is something more they should know or understand can be threatening to some teachers with a fixed mindset (Diana, 2014). Co-teaching can provide teaching teams with a safe space to build trust as they work through co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing.

The primary means of professional growth for mentor teachers comes from the collaboration and dialogue required for co-planning and co-evaluating in a co-teaching model. Mentor teachers learn by observing and reflecting on the teacher candidate's progress in teaching, through which they can develop their own skills (Diana, 2014; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016). As mentor teachers make their own knowledge explicit, they deconstruct their own practices and reflect on what they do and why (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016; Grothe, 2013; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012). Studies on mentor teacher growth note that while there is research on mentor teachers' role, there is little research examining the ways mentor teachers are impacted by their work with teacher candidates (Clarke et al., 2012; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016).

Teacher Learning as a Mentor Teacher

Mentor teachers are increasingly uninspired by the generic form of professional development offered by many school districts, but that does not mean they do not desire to learn (Korthagen, 2017). According to andragogy theory, adults engage in learning for

many reasons, one of which is job advancement (Knowles, 1990). Knowles (1990) applied four principles to adult learning, including the ideas that adults want to be involved in planning and constructing their learning and that learning should have immediate relevance to and impact on an adult's career or personal life. Today, teachers seek individualized professional growth opportunities that allow them to develop in their own practice (Korthagen, 2017).

Traditionally, there has been a belief in education that if a teacher wants to lead and work with adults, he or she should become an administrator (Muijs & Harris, 2003). However, with expanding formal and informal roles for teacher leadership in districts, an increasing number of teachers wish to learn and lead from within their classrooms (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher learning begins many years before a teacher candidate enters a teacher-preparation program. Feiman-Nemser (2012) noted that the influence on teacher learning begins when teachers observe interactions between their own teachers and parents as children. Whether or not they realize it, much of their behavior is an imitation of their favorite teachers based on the interactions they internalized from years spent as a student in a classroom (Lortie, 1975). Once candidates become teachers, the imitation that helped them form their teacher identity, rather than analytical and reflective pedagogical practices, tends to become the driving force behind their continued learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

Two views of teacher learning. Many factors influence whether a teacher becomes a teacher learner, among them the teacher's disposition, his or her own experience as a student, how he or she was prepared to become a teacher, and the

environment in which the teacher carries out his or her work (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). According to Feiman-Nemser (2012), there are two views about what happens to teachers after they have mastered the art of teaching. In the first view, teachers set their routines, stabilize their practice, and become resistant to change. In the second view, teachers continue to grow and change because they want to be more effective for their students and need challenges in their work through academic and intellectual stimulation. This fixed mindset-versus-growth mindset view is not helped by the majority of professional development in schools, which is largely one-size-fits-all and based on compliance with state mandates or school and district initiatives where teachers get information in one setting and are expected to apply it in another (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). For teacher learning to be effective, it should take place in context as embedded professional development (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Putnam & Borko, 2000). Mentoring a teacher candidate meets this standard because both learning and application take place in praxis.

Preparation for the role of mentor teacher. There is little debate about the value of training mentor teachers (Sanchez et al., 2016). However, part of the reason training mentor teachers is not as widespread as it should be is that there has been no agreement about how training should happen and what mentoring models should be used (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gareis & Grant, 2014; Gut et al., 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015). Multiple studies, including a meta-analysis, have shown that classroom teachers who volunteer to host teacher candidates generally do so for the good of the profession, but they are often unequipped for their role (Clarke, 2006; Clarke et al., 2014; Gareis & Grant, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Jaspers et al., 2014). The shift from cooperating

teacher to mentor teacher requires a change of culture in both school districts and EPPs away from the idea that student teaching is about the transmission of knowledge from classroom teacher to teacher candidate and toward the idea that it is about knowledge development for both through active engagement, deconstruction of practice, and reflection (Stanulis et al., 2018). This shift requires a shared understanding of the mentor teacher's role and the importance of training. Student teaching should be a scaffolded and reflective experience rather than one where the teacher candidate is left to learn how to teach without much support beyond feedback on lessons that are evaluated (Gareis & Grant, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Valencia et al., 2009).

Mentor teacher learning in traditional and co-teaching models of student teaching. While mentor teacher learning can occur whether the traditional model or co-teaching model is used, the nature of these interactions is different. The traditional model allows the mentor teacher to observe and provide feedback in a supervisory role, while the co-teaching model requires increased collaboration and communication that leads to inquiry and reflection (Guise et al., 2017). Clarke's (2006) analysis of cooperating teachers who hosted teacher candidates using the traditional takeover model of student teaching examined how cooperating teachers framed their own practices of teaching and mentoring as they reflected on their work with teacher candidates. The study showed that cooperating teachers learned from their interactions with the teacher candidates and reframed their own practices as a result, but that reflection was inconsistent and happened because of specific incidents rather than as a consistent part of practice. Hudson (2013) conducted a study of mentor teachers utilizing a traditional model during a four-week

practicum and concluded that mentoring acted as a form of professional development for both the teacher candidates and the mentor teachers because it provided them with feedback and engagement with new practices. However, the mentor teachers noted they would have gained even more from the experience and been more effective if they had received formal training in mentoring. In the co-teaching model, Rytivaara and Kershner (2012) noted that effective professional development included an embedded experience, active learning, and growth that could be applied to the larger teaching context. In the co-teaching model, teacher candidates get to observe the mentor teacher model different practices throughout the experience. The mentor teacher gets into the habit of making his or her practice explicit and the dialogue that follows promotes a level of reflection not seen in the traditional model (Bacharach & Heck, 2012). However, Rytivaara and Kershner (2012) found that the possibilities for teacher learning emerging from the collaboration required for co-teaching depend on the training the teaching team receives and whether the model is implemented with fidelity as a truly cooperative effort or if there was a distinct hierarchy present.

Perceptions and Attitudes of Mentoring Preservice Teachers

It is important to understand mentor teachers' perceptions and attitudes because they define the approach used in working with teacher candidates. Mentor teachers' understanding of their role, preferences in teaching and learning, experiences in mentoring, and relationship with teacher candidates (Gut et al., 2014) all influence their perceptions and actions. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) defined teaching perspective as the "beliefs, actions, motivations, and intentions in relation to the manner in which one

conceives the context of learning" (p. 66). The mentor teacher role largely depends on individual perceptions and experiences (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Gut et al., 2014). An understanding of the perceptions and experiences that guide mentor teachers' actions can provide the insight needed to address issues through training and program changes.

Mentoring based on perspective. The perspective mentor teachers take toward their role explains their actions during the student teaching experience. In a study by Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005), 301 mentor teachers used an instrument called the Teaching Perspectives Inventory to examine how teaching perspectives related to their teaching practices. The overwhelming perspective of those with a single dominant perspective was nurturing (52%), meaning mentor teachers believed there was an emotional and an academic component to teaching. Mentor teachers believed they must build a climate of caring and trust that offered both challenges and supports for the teacher candidate to learn. When mentor teachers with two dominant perspectives were included, the percentage of nurturers went up to 64%. Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) noted further that nurturing perspective significantly outweighed other perspectives, such as apprenticeship, where the learner duplicates another's practice, which measured 10.2%. The transmission perspective, which expected teacher candidates to absorb information the mentor teacher presented, measured 9%. The developmental perspective measured 5.3% and focused on what learners knew and how learners learned to build on existing knowledge. Finally, the social reform perspective, which examined the political aspects of teaching in terms of what is taught to a particular group and why, measured only 0.6%. When broken down, the majority of mentor teachers holding an

apprenticeship, transmission, or developmental perspective were secondary teachers, while the majority of nurturers were elementary teachers (Clarke & Jarvis-Selinger, 2005). These perspectives provide insight into mentor teachers' practices that might help districts and EPPs match candidates to mentors so there is growth for both. However, if these perspectives are fixed, knowing the mentor teacher's stance before pairing him or her with a teacher candidate can help ensure a successful match.

While knowing mentor teachers' perspectives toward their role is helpful, it is also useful to examine the conceptions they use when they think about their practice. A study by van Ginkel, Verloop, and Denessen (2016) noted that in previous empirical studies of mentor teachers' motives for their own learning, two dominant viewpoints emerged: other-orientated and self-development. In other words, mentor teachers took on the learner role either to help others or help themselves. However, when van Ginkel et al. (2016) examined teachers' mentoring conceptions, beliefs, and goals, they classified them as either instrumental or developmental. These two conceptions were not mutually exclusive, but they formed the basis for models and beliefs the mentor teachers used. As noted by van Ginkel et al., (2016), the instrumental conception was concerned with effective teaching practices and included learning tools and routines to maintain control over the classroom. These mentors wanted to hand over control as soon as possible, and the basis of their mentoring was performance improvement. The mentor in this relationship, seen as a maestro, did not feel he or she had much to learn. The relationship was asymmetrical and based on a mindset that either the teacher candidate understood the

information or skills as they were presented or they failed to learn because they did not understand (van Ginkel et al., 2016).

The developmental conception focused on teacher candidates and student learning, emphasizing the underlying and integrating principles of teaching. It encouraged teacher candidates to dig deeper in their desire to understand the connections between teaching and learning (van Ginkel et al., 2016). In the study by van Ginkel et al. (2016), the developmental mentor saw the relationship as symmetrical, where he or she was also learning by mentoring, and understood knowledge development took time and could be learned through co-thinking and co-learning.

Another study of mentor teachers conducted by van Ginkel et al. (2016) at 13 EPPs in the Netherlands examined mentor teachers' mentoring motives with their conceptions of mentored learning. In the sample of 296 teachers, the authors found that mentors who had a personal motive for learning tended to have a developmental conception. In the recommendations, the authors suggested programs should take into account mentor teachers' motives and structure activities such as co-reflection and co-planning to increase the mentor teachers' potential learning (van Ginkel et al., 2016).

Further studies support the importance of perceptions and clear roles for mentor teachers. Rozelle and Wilson's (2012) ethnographic study of six teachers focused on changes to beginning science teachers' practices and beliefs during a yearlong internship. Another series of seven case studies discussed by Jaspers et al. (2014) reinforced the importance of training for mentor teachers. Both studies found that in a traditional model of student teaching, mentor teachers often thought it was their role to provide some

methods that work in the classroom and a place for teacher candidates to practice teaching while providing feedback and support. Rather than explain why and how they taught, the mentors felt successful when the teacher candidates replicated their practice (Goodwin et al., 2016; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012).

Another study on mentor teachers' roles and dispositions by Rivera (2016) reported that mentor teachers felt their primary responsibilities to teacher candidates were modeling, mentoring, advising, and informally evaluating, but they also cited a lack of time to do so and the difficulty of playing an evaluative role without proper training. However, Rozelle and Wilson (2012) showed that when mentors took the time to reflect and deconstruct their roles as teacher and mentor, there was the potential for professional growth.

Mentoring based on experience. Goodwin et al.'s (2016) findings showed that even though mentor teachers received training in educative mentoring, they seemed intent on replicating what was already in place and helping teacher candidates become familiar with what was already known. The dyads in this study used the traditional takeover model, and many of the mentors thought their teacher candidates were successful when they demonstrated independence, an instrumental perspective. One of the major problems mentor teachers cited was a lack of time to debrief and reflect, which meant that the majority of mentoring was focused on short-term issues rather than on a broader perspective of learning. In Gut et al.'s (2014) study, mentor teachers who spent more time with their teacher candidates had a better chance of developing positive relationships

with them because the increased communication and collaboration made it less likely that the teacher candidates would seem passive or uncommitted.

Rytivaara and Kershner (2012) examined a co-teaching model of two fully certified teachers and their learning processes as they shared their individual knowledge and experiences and constructed new knowledge together through teacher talk focused on problem-solving and reflection. The success of this situated learning depended in part on whether the teachers using the model were able to "de-situate" the knowledge from a particular situation to generalize it and apply it to broader practice. However, among secondary school teachers, it also depended on whether the teachers preferred individual learning opportunities over collaboration and whether they were willing to learn (Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012).

To explore the mentoring role as a means of professional development for mentor teachers, the present study examined situated learning through the way mentor teachers talked about their experiences working with teacher candidates. This dialogue was analyzed using Wenger's (1998) components for situated learning to determine whether the increased collaboration and communication needed in a co-teaching model changed mentor teachers' practices.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I considered the current research about mentor teachers' role in a co-teaching model of student teaching, which included professional development opportunities and how mentor teachers' perceptions of their role might affect practice. The theory section examined why a co-teaching model, with its increased collaboration

and communication, sets up a community of practice that allows both the mentor and the teacher candidate to engage in socially situated learning.

The mentor teacher's role and its evolution are especially important to understand because the shift in understanding knowledge development from transmission to transformation has not yet become ubiquitous. In the absence of a common understanding of what mentoring is, mentor teachers perceive their roles in vastly different ways. Three studies came to a similar conclusion about training for mentor teachers. The first was a study by Gut et al. (2014) of 18 mentor teachers to determine differences in mentoring practices across different clinical settings. The second study by Izadinia (2016) examined the perceptions and expectations of nine mentor teachers to determine whether they had the same understanding of the role as their teacher candidates. The third study by Johnson and Napper-Owen (2011) focused on mentor teachers' role and perceptions in a seven-week student-teaching experience. All the studies came to a similar conclusion: mentor teachers who understand the EPP's expectations are more likely to be confident in their role, which results in positive relationships with teacher candidates. Further support of training for mentor teachers comes from a study of 101 mentor teachers by Hudson (2013) that investigated mentoring as professional development in a traditional model of student teaching. Hudson (2013) determined that a lack of training in current mentoring practices restricted mentor teachers' ability to take advantage of their own learning and limited teacher candidates' opportunities to succeed.

This analysis of co-teaching discussed the implications of co-teaching and recognized that it is not a cure for poor instructional practices. The analysis further

examined the requirements for successfully implementing the co-teaching model in student teaching. Co-teaching is promising as a learning experience for mentor teachers, teacher candidates, and students when the supports are in place for the model's effective implementation.

The section above on professional learning for teachers discussed the value of embedded professional development and the shift that districts need to move away from one-size-fits-all models where individuals are expected to learn information in one setting and apply it in another toward more experiential learning. The section on mentor teachers' perceptions examined the attitudes and beliefs that guide these teachers' practices.

The present study focused on utilizing a co-teaching model of student teaching as professional development for mentor teachers. While much of the current research analyzes the mentoring experience, it does so in a traditional model of student teaching, where there is often a lack of time to debrief and dialogue consists of constructive criticism from the mentor teacher to the teacher candidate. Even with little or no training for their mentoring role, teachers in a co-teaching model must collaborate and communicate on a daily basis as they deconstruct their practices and reflect on learning. Whether or not those skills translate into the mentor teacher's professional growth remains to be seen.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The opportunity to serve as a mentor teacher in a co-teaching model provides increased opportunities to engage in collaboration and communication with adults, which are the hallmarks of teacher leadership. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the growth of nine mentor teachers who hosted candidates from a midwestern university during a single semester of student teaching to determine how a co-teaching model of student teaching impacted their teaching practice and mentoring skills. I drew the sample from the mentor teachers hosting a teacher candidate for a 16-week single-semester student-teaching placement at MSU, which routinely uses a co-teaching model.

This chapter includes several sections describing the qualitative study's research design, the rationale for selecting this design, and my role as the researcher. The methodology section includes topics explaining participant selection, as well as the study's data-collection instrument, procedure, and data-analysis plan. I discuss ethical considerations, including a section on issues of trustworthiness and the chapter concludes with a final summary of research methods.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative study consisted of a convenience sample of mentor teachers who hosted teacher candidates for a 16-week single-semester student-teaching experience. A phenomenological study describes common meaning that individuals make of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013), in this case mentoring a teacher candidate during a co-teaching model of student teaching. I used a purposive convenience sample because the program at MSU also featured some teacher candidates seeking

multiple certifications who had two or three placements with different teachers during the same 16-week period. Hosting a teacher candidate for a shorter duration did not allow comparisons across the participant pool because the mentor teachers did not have the same amount of time to experience growth.

Research Questions

This study was guided by three questions, each examining mentor teachers' growth in a co-teaching model of student teaching through a different level of participation in a community of practice:

RQ1: How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

RQ2: How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

RQ3: How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I have no affiliations with MSU or its teacher preparation program. The selection of the site was influenced by the program's strong tradition of co-teaching and its similarities to teacher-preparation programs in the state where I live. I received the mentor teachers' contact information from the director of field experiences at MSU after obtaining IRB approval from that institution and sending out correspondence independent of MSU. Thus, the mentor teachers did not feel pressured by the university to participate on behalf of their teacher candidates. Participants who

completed the second part of the study, which consisted of a series of three interviews per teacher, received a Target gift card to thank them for their time when the interviews were completed.

Methodology

This qualitative study consisted of three interviews per participant that investigated mentor teachers' current and past experiences in education. The three interviews conducted at the end of the student-teaching experience allowed participants to tell their stories, which Seidman (2013) points at as significant to making meaning of their experiences.

Participant Selection Logic

In terms of geography, the EPP at MSU places teacher candidates in one of six regions in two states. Teacher-candidate placements occur in one of the 70 districts where the university has partnerships. According to Title II data from 2012-2015, there are between 232 and 273 program completers from MSU in a given academic year (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2016), with a larger number of candidates student-teaching in the spring because of the timing of program entry. Approximately 100 mentor teachers hosted a single candidate for a full semester of student teaching. After receiving approval from MSU's independent review board, the director of clinical experiences released the names and contact information of eligible mentor teachers. I contacted teachers through email independent of MSU, explaining the study's topic and confidentiality, and asking mentor teachers to provide some basic demographic

information, including which grades and subjects they taught, how long they had been a teacher, and whether this was their first time hosting a teacher candidate.

Once the mentor teachers completed the consent form, nine teachers volunteered to take part in the interviews and all volunteers became participants. The participants completed three interviews each at the end of the student-teaching experience. Based on responses and the number of potential participants, the study required between eight and 15 participants for the interview phase. Seidman (2013) has pointed out that two measures, sufficiency and saturation, must be met to determine that enough participants have been interviewed. In terms of sufficiency for the present study, it was important to ensure that the number of interview participants reflected the range of sites and geography that mirrored the overall sample of eligible mentor teachers from MSU. In terms of saturation, although some researchers suggest numbers as high as 25, Seidman (2013) has suggested that when a researcher keeps hearing the same information reported, he or she has reached saturation.

Instrumentation

The ability to find cross-cutting themes among a wide variety of people helps the researcher get to the core of an experience (Seidman, 2013). To ensure participants with diverse demographics participated in this study, I used a purposeful sample based on demographics from the consent forms to screen participants for phenomenological interviews, which consisted of in-person, audio-recorded interviews at the end of the student-teaching experience. The demographic information from the consent forms showed participants' varied backgrounds and experiences and prevented a homogeneous

participant pool where several mentor teachers might have taught the same grade or had similar levels of experience. The interviews explored factors affecting these teachers' professional growth in practice and development of mentoring skills.

The in-person interview format allowed the participants to become comfortable with me in time, another critical point to which Seidman (2013) refers. All participants were able to participate in in-person interviews in the course of a 3-week period. The interviews each contained three parts, were conducted a few days to a week apart, and explored participants' histories in education, details of the mentor teachers' daily experiences, and reflections of the overall mentor teacher experience. Seidman noted that the three-interview process allowed the participant to explore his or her own experience, place the experience in context, and reflect on its meaning. To understand the meaning of the participant's experiences as mentor teachers, I needed to be able to place their actions in the context of their lives I designed the open-ended interview questions, which were field-tested ahead of the study and can be found in Appendix A.

Three-Part Phenomenological Interviews

The design of the three-part phenomenological interview process allowed participants to fully tell their stories about a lived experience and how they made meaning of that experience, which Seidman (2013) has highlighted as significant to giving participants a voice in research. Rather than a single interview that might have captured only a snapshot of a much larger picture, the three-part interview allowed the participants and me to examine the phenomenon in question in the context of their past and present experiences. Asking participants to reconstruct their experiences allowed me

to understand their views of these experiences. Without the context provided within the three interviews, it would have been difficult to explore the meaning of participants' experiences, an element of research Patton (2015) has highlighted as especially important.

Field Test

The interview questions were field-tested with two master elementary school teachers with more than 15 years of experience each, both of whom have won numerous local, state, and national awards for their teaching. Both have served as mentor teachers multiple times and worked with student teachers in both the traditional and co-teaching models. The first mentor teacher lives and works in southern New Jersey and I conducted the interviews in person. The second mentor teacher lives and teaches in New England, so the interviews were conducted virtually through Google Hangouts. I captured audio recordings of both interviews using a digital recorder and uploaded them to a laptop for transcription. After the interviews, I discussed my goals for the study and sought input from these expert reviewers about the questions and responses. A third expert reviewer, the dean of a school of education at a New Jersey university, was also consulted about the interview questions because of her experience with research.

The transcripts of interviews and notes taken in discussions after the interviews were used to improve the protocol by adding information to several questions to scaffold and clarify. This included defining the term *community of practice* before asking a participant to characterize the specific community of practice at his or her school. Other questions, such as those asking the mentor teacher to take me through a typical day with a

teacher candidate, were too broad and ran the risk of digressing into a tangent. Additional probes were needed to help the participant maintain focus and touch on some crucial moments of planning and reflection during the school day. The interview for the first participant during the field test was much shorter than expected, without clarifying statements or probes. I made adjustments to ensure that the necessary information could be obtained while also being respectful of the participant's time. Although each interview was projected to last 90 minutes, the field test showed that each round would be closer to 60 minutes.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

It is important for researchers to remain objective. Thus, this study was undertaken at a location where I had no prior relationships with educators, students, or university personnel that might have created a conflict of interest. After some research on programs with a history of using a co-teaching model of student teaching, I made initial contact with the college of education at MSU to establish it as the study site. Further communication was established with college of education personnel, including the dean, the director of clinical experiences, and a faculty member connected with the student-teaching program. In October 2016, I attended an in-person meeting to discuss the study and the possibility of using MSU as a study site. MSU agreed to serve as the study site contingent on IRB approval from both MSU and Walden.

An introductory letter to explain the study, collect demographic information, and provide a link to the consent form was sent to mentor teachers as soon as IRB approval was granted in order to secure participants for interviews conducted at the conclusion of

the student-teaching experience. I collected data from in-person interviews in the form of audio-recordings, which were sent to an online company called Rev for transcription, and notes written in a journal. According to Seidman (2013), interviews should take place between three days and one week apart, allowing participants to reflect on the previous interview but not completely disconnect from the researcher. Thus, I made contact via email or phone to set up interviews that fit the mentor teachers' schedules. I worked with the participants to find a mutually agreed-upon location where they felt comfortable. Each interview was 60 minutes or less to respect the mentor teachers' time. Participant follow-up was conducted via virtual meetings or email, depending on the reason for the follow-up.

Participants were told in the initial letter of consent that they were able to leave the study at any time within the interview process or within a specified time frame after the interview and before publication of the study's results. This information was restated at the beginning of the interview process. The participants also had the right to review transcripts of their interviews and correct or clarify anything they felt might have been misinterpreted. Participants could also let me know if they no longer wished to participate so they could withdraw from the study.

Data-Analysis Plan

The first research question sought to gather information about the mentor teachers' initial expectations of their roles during the student-teaching experience. The first interview collected information about the mentor teachers' educational histories and how they became mentor teachers. The mentor teachers' backgrounds also provided

insight about how their initial expectations had been shaped. The first interview also explored how the mentor teachers perceived Lave and Wenger's (1991) idea of a community of practice and why serving as a mentor teacher in a co-teaching model was worth pursuing.

The second interview asked mentor teachers to talk about their daily work with teacher candidates. Questions explored the second research question regarding how mentor teachers describe their identity and growth during their mentorship of teacher candidates. This interview explored Wenger's (1998) component of practice as the participants recounted the daily work of being mentor teachers and how co-teaching and mentoring contributed to shared resources, frameworks, and perspectives required for a successful experience. The interview also explored identity as the participants explained how their own professional identities had changed in the context of their work as mentor teachers.

The third interview, which asked mentor teachers to make meaning of their individual experiences as part of the larger student-teaching experience, was used to address the third question of how mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of education, in alignment with Wenger's (1998) first component of situated learning, meaning. Growth was measured by how the participants talked about their changing abilities to experience what they did as meaningful. Answering these questions required participants' self-reflection about their experiences and the information they had shared in the first two interviews. After reflecting on the process

and talking through what was required of mentor teachers daily, the participants began to make sense of their own experiences as they related them to me.

Coding

After the interviews were completed, the audio-recordings were sent to Rev for transcription from audio to text. Once I received the written transcripts, I reviewed them for accuracy and then sent them to the participants for verification. The interview process produced vast amounts of data for each participant. These data were coded using two processes: developing a profile for each participant and searching for larger themes among participants. Creating a profile for each participant allowed me to present them in context, understand their intentions, and convey a sense of process and time for experiencing the phenomenon (a process supported by Seidman, 2013). Creating a narrative allowed me to process the data and share the participants' stories.

The second process entailed inductive analysis and the search for themes regarding growth between and among participant responses based on Wenger's (1998) components for socially situated learning. Themes included how the mentor teachers talked about meaning, practice, community, and identity as learners rather than as instructors. Hand-coding—the reading, marking, and labeling of the material— helped me designate which passages were of interest and identify where they occurred within the transcripts. Once data coding was completed, the key was to describe the main features or characteristics that emerged from the coding. Once organized, the passages revealed patterns that were placed into categories. Once these categories developed, the connecting threads and patterns were organized into themes. Mertler (2016) has advised

researchers that during the coding and description process, connections between the data and the research questions should emerge. Seidman (2013) has also noted that inconsistent or contradictory passages play an important part in making connections and understanding a larger theme. Thus, the final step after organizing the data for this study was interpreting it to examine the events, behaviors, and observations that represented the coded categories (as noted by Mertler, 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

There are always trustworthiness issues in qualitative research because the interviewer is part of the process. As the interviewer guides the participant through guided reflection about an experience, it affects both the interviewer and the participant. The process of interviewing can be life-altering, but no one knows beforehand what kind of impact an interview will have (Patton, 2015). One of the biggest problems in interviewing is controlling for interviewer bias based on past experiences and assumptions. In order to clarify bias, it is important for the researcher to engage in self-reflection and be realistic about how the interpretation of findings is partially based on personal experiences (Creswell, 2009).

Confirmability focuses on freedom from researcher bias, or at least the acknowledgement that biases exist (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This study clearly outlined the methods and procedures in detail, followed the sequence of data-collection, and was clear enough to be replicated by researchers in the future. While an interviewer must be as impartial as possible, refraining from making judgmental comments or gestures during the interview process, he or she must also build rapport with

the participants so they feel comfortable enough during the interview to answer honestly. My experience working with mentor teachers in a teacher-preparation program at an EPP provided some common ground to help me build rapport with participants, but it also meant it was important to isolate that experience from the study. Creswell (2013) has noted the importance of recognizing personal experience to ensure it does not lead to researcher biases or assumptions within the study. Similarly, Seidman (2013) has recognized that the connection between participant and interviewer plays a key part in interviewing. Although building rapport with participants was important in the present study, as well, I recognize the responses I received are in part due to my interaction with the participants.

The three-part interview process served several functions in establishing measures of validity and credibility that demonstrate whether the data are an authentic portrait of the phenomenon being studied (Miles et al., 2014). The space between interviews and the duration of each interview built trust with the participants and allowed me to check for misinformation, which Creswell (2013) has identified as important. Since the interviews took place a few days apart from each other, the prolonged engagement allowed me to check for internal consistency of statements between interviews. This examination over time allowed me to account for idiosyncratic days where something external to the interview might have affected the participants' responses, a point about which Seidman (2013) has cautioned researchers. Building a relationship with participants over time also meant I was able to identify particular "tells" that might have shown a participant was grappling with how to answer. According to Patton (2015), these signs might include

syntax, nervous laughter, extended pauses, uncomfortable body language, and the search for words that might indicate a publicly acceptable answer instead of how the participant really feels.

A second purpose of the three-part interview in establishing credibility is the ability to compare participants' responses. The ability to connect events across the pool of participants during the student-teaching experience was helpful in establishing trustworthiness. These events included meeting the teacher candidates, attending MSU training sessions, conducting evaluations, meeting the university supervisor, introducing the teacher candidate to the classroom, and attending the final day of student teaching for the teacher candidate. Knowing there were key events was useful for redirecting the interview if the participant veered off on a tangent, or for giving me an opportunity to delve deeper into a particular aspect of the experience (see Seidman, 2013).

A final reason the three-part interview process established validity is that it helped the participants make sense of their experiences as they discussed them with me. If one of the goals of interviewing, as noted by Seidman (2013), is to help participants reflect and learn from the experiences they explain, sometimes the ability to talk through an experience with someone asking clarifying questions provides the stimulus for authentic knowledge development.

Transferability, or the issue of generalization in case-to-case transfer, depends on the researcher providing enough information about a particular case that the readers might be able to establish a degree of similarity between the case being studied and a case to which findings might be transferred (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015). Although this

study sought a wide variation in the participant pool based on demographics, one must be careful not to generalize one person's or group's experiences as being more significant than they are. Many factors, including geography, school culture, and personal issues, are beyond the interviewer's control and may have impacted the participants' responses. My primary concern about transferability was ensuring that enough information is given and identifying data about the case being studied is removed so participants' identities are not revealed (see Miles et al., 2014).

Dependability focuses on the process of inquiry and responsibility to ensure that the process was logical, traceable, and documented (Patton, 2015). The ability to corroborate data from different sources to ensure the study's dependability is important in understanding themes that may emerge. As recommended by Seidman (2013), dependability was established in this study through the three-interview process, which allowed the phenomenon in question to be seen in context. Creswell (2013) has suggested that dependability can also be established by having participants review interview transcripts. In this study, participants had access to review their own transcripts and, through this process, validate my findings and interpretations.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures included IRB considerations and approvals from both MSU and Walden University to ensure that all human subjects were treated ethically. I met with MSU personnel in October 2016 to discuss the study and data collection. After attaining IRB approval from MSU and Walden University (Walden approval number 04-12-18-0393273), the director of clinical experiences at MSU released contact information

for the eligible mentor teachers in a given semester. The potential participants received a letter to explain the study's purpose and procedures, along with a link to the consent form, which detailed the procedures for the three-interview process and explained that participants had the right to review interview materials and transcripts once the interviews were over and had the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interviews or within a certain period after the interviews and before publication.

The audio files for all participant interviews were sent to Rev for transcription. Rev specializes in audio-to-text transcription and provided a non-disclosure agreement guaranteeing participants' confidentiality. This documentation was included in the IRB application for the study and the company and its purpose were explained in the participant consent form.

During the construction of profiles and data coding, I reviewed the work to ensure there was no identifying information in the data that would reveal participants' names. Further, the participants chose the interview sites, which were agreed upon by the interviewer to make sure participants did not feel pressured by MSU and could not be identified by colleagues.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the study's design, researcher's role, methodology, procedures, and issues of trustworthiness related to this study. This study was conducted during a single-semester student-teaching experience at the MSU college of education, a teacher-preparation program where I have no affiliations. The initial participant sample completed a demographic survey that provided valuable information. The study consisted

of three phenomenological interviews for each participant. All efforts were made to ensure participants' confidentiality. The next chapter contains an analysis of the data and discussion of the study results.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter includes an analysis of the experiences of nine public school teachers who recently hosted teacher candidates for a single semester of student teaching and utilized a co-teaching model for some or all of the duration. This study used a phenomenological approach as the research methodology to examine the role of mentor teachers' growth in a co-teaching model of student teaching. Data analysis in this chapter is consistent with the techniques guided by Seidman (2013), Creswell (2013), and Patton (2015), allowing researchers to build on this work in the future.

I framed research questions to gain a deeper understanding of how mentor teachers using a co-teaching model during a single semester of student teaching described their initial expectations about their roles, described their identity and growth, and applied their learning and growth to the larger context of the teaching profession. Using procedures outlined in Chapter 3, I have analyzed the data and had participants member-check their interview transcripts for accuracy.

Chapter 4 includes the following sections: Setting, Data Collection, Demographics, Data Analysis, Evidence of Trustworthiness, and Results.

Setting

Data collection for this study took place during the final few weeks of the school year when teachers were beginning to pack away their classrooms for the summer. Three teachers participating in the study came from two schools in a district that was experiencing budget cuts, which resulted in one teacher's school closing. The teacher from the closing school was clearly affected by the situation and requested that two of the

three interviews take place outside of the building. The other two teachers taught in a school across town that was not closing, but they knew staff assignments for the following year would be shifted after absorbing the teachers from the closing school. These events likely affected the morale of everybody in the district. The exhaustion accompanying the end of a school year and the discomfort of teaching in classrooms without air conditioning during the interview period may have influenced these participants' responses to interview questions related to morale, such as district and school climate and culture.

Data Collection

After obtaining IRB approval from Walden and MSU, I contacted the director of clinical experiences at MSU and obtained contact information for mentor teachers who had worked with a teacher candidate during the most recent semester. As per state requirements, these mentor teachers were licensed in the area in which they provided supervision and possessed a minimum of three years successful teaching experience. I invited 101 potential participants from 39 districts to participate in the study. The email contained a general description of the study and a copy of the consent form. Five participants responded to the initial email within a week and consented to participate. I began scheduling the interviews and sent the participants a link to complete the demographic survey. A week and a half later, I sent a reminder email to the remaining potential participants inviting them to join the study. The mailing resulted in securing four more potential participants, who were also sent the survey to complete. All nine participants who responded met the criteria of hosting a teacher candidate for the full

spring semester and using a co-teaching model for some or all of the student-teaching experience. The teachers, whose districts were located in one of two states, taught various grade levels from kindergarten to 12th grade. The eight female teachers and one male teacher became study participants, agreeing to be interviewed and review the transcripts when the interviews were complete.

The study required a purposive sample of at least eight participants. Nine volunteers met the criteria and were accepted as participants for the study. Those nine participants completed first-round interviews. According to Seidman (2013), there are two criteria for having a sufficient number of participants: sufficiency and saturation of information. In terms of sufficiency, participants in this study demonstrated a range of experience, grade levels, ages, and genders, which might help others outside the sample connect to the participants' experiences. After the first round of interviews, I heard much of the same information reported from the nine participants, indicating saturation, and I did not recruit any additional participants. Table 1 shows the data-collection timeline for this study.

Table 1

Timeline of Data Collection

Date	Event
April 20	Obtained final IRB approval
April 26	Received contact information for participants from MSU
April 27	Emailed potential participants with consent letter
May 2	First five participants responded and were sent link to demographic survey. Scheduled first interviews with these participants
May 14	Sent reminder email to remaining participant pool
May 16	Four more participants responded to email and were sent link to demographic survey. Scheduled first interviews for remaining participants
May 15	Started first round of interviews
June 1	Completed final interview
June 12	Participants sent transcripts for member-checking
July 8	Participant deadline for returning corrected transcripts

Data collection took place with approximately 3 weeks left in the K-12 school year. Because of my work with a teacher-preparation program, where part of my professional responsibilities includes educating future co-teaching candidates and teaching a coaching and mentoring class for mentor teachers, it was important for me to use the epoché process to bracket my own experiences in a journal to be aware of my own preconceived notions. Moustakas (1994) explained that the epoché process is

important because researchers need to be aware of imposing prejudgment, set aside biases, and be present to understand others' experiences. Giorgi (2009) noted that bracketing an experience is not a matter of forgetting the past, but it helps the researcher keep personal prior knowledge and understanding that can lead to bias from being engaged so the focus remains on the present experience. Prior to beginning the face-to-face interviews, I reviewed the interview questions and bracketed my thoughts so I would recognize any bias. As the person who provides co-teaching training to the mentor teachers for my own program, I could not assume these teachers would have a similar understanding or training in the model. Also, as a former mentor teacher, I could not assume these mentor teachers would have the same experiences as me. Part of the bracketing process meant ensuring that I was listening to each teacher's unique story based on his or her own training and experiences. The goal was not to compare these teachers with myself and make judgments on whether they were effective mentor teachers, but to make sure I understood how each teacher's cultural relevance affected his or her current practice and determine whether growth had occurred.

I interviewed each participant in person three times in the course of a 3-week period. The interviews took place with a few days to 1 week between interviews, as guided by Seidman's (2013) phenomenological interview protocol. Two participants completed their second and third interviews on the same day because of scheduling challenges. Seidman (2013) noted, "It is always better to conduct an interview under less than ideal conditions rather than not to conduct one at all" (p. 25). At their request, I spoke to three of the candidates on the phone before the first interview to provide details

about the study and answer questions. Those three candidates thought a phone call would be faster than asking questions through email. The remaining candidates agreed to schedule interview times and dates through email and asked any questions they had when we met in person.

First-round interviews were organized with participants via email or telephone. The participants chose the interview sites, and all selected their own classrooms, except for one who chose to meet with me off campus. I shared with all participants prior to starting the first interview that the first interview would focus on their path to becoming a mentor teacher, the second would focus on the daily practices of serving as a mentor teacher, and the third would focus on how their experiences as a mentor teacher related to education beyond the classroom. At the conclusion of each teacher interview, the participant and I scheduled the next interview date and time.

Participants all answered 19 questions included in the three rounds of interviews, and when necessary I asked additional probing questions. (see Appendix A for questions). After using inductive reasoning to explore patterns after the second round of interviews, I realized that I was missing some information and added a probe to the final question in the third interview, which asked what advice the mentor teacher would give to a colleague who was thinking about working with a teacher candidate. The probing question asked if, in hindsight, there were any areas in which the mentor teacher would have liked to have more training prior to working with a teacher candidate. This question allowed the participants to further reflect on their experiences as mentor teachers. Several participants thanked me when all the interviews were over because the questions I had

asked caused them to reflect on their roles as mentor teachers and how effective they were in that role.

Seidman (2013) recommended that each interview last no more than 90 minutes, and I was able to complete all interview questions within that time frame. I audio recorded all interviews on a handheld recorder, and at the end of each round of interviews, uploaded the files for transcription to Rev, an online transcription company approved by the IRB process. Rev converted the files to text within 24 hours and sent them back to me via email. After receiving the text files of the audio-recorded interviews, I used Microsoft Word to review and amend transcripts to ensure the words matched and any words the transcriber considered inaudible were corrected. I sent the transcripts to participants for member-checking via Walden email. Each participant reviewed his or her interview transcripts and had the opportunity to make corrections during member-checking. This process was followed to ensure responses best represented the participants' views. All participants completed the member-checking process. Electronic and hard copies of consent forms, as well as the audio-recordings and transcripts, were securely stored.

Demographics

Each of the nine participants fit the following research criteria required to participate in the study: (a) they had hosted a teacher candidate in the most recent spring semester, and (b) they had used a co-teaching model while working with that candidate. In addition, all participants had completed a traditional college or university teacher-preparation program where they were required to complete student teaching. Those

requirements varied among the participant teachers in terms of duration, placement grades, and quality.

Table 2 shows demographic information for the teachers who participated in this study. The table is followed by brief descriptions of the participants' educational backgrounds and student-teaching experiences as they went through their EPPs. All teachers had at least three years of experience, as required by state code to serve as a mentor teacher. Teacher participants are referred to with pseudonyms.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Participant Mentor Teachers

Participants	Gender	Years teaching	Years in district	Number of teacher candidates previously hosted	Grade(s) taught	Type of district
Haley	Female	15	0-4	6+	9,10,11,12	Rural
Violet	Female	29	16+	3-5	2	Rural
Charlotte	Female	17	11-15	6+	2	Suburban
Allison	Female	20	5-10	6+	K	Suburban
Jennifer	Female	8	5-10	0	1	Urban
Mark	Male	26	16+	1-2	2	Rural
Rosie	Female	19	16+	3-5	4,5	Rural
Rosalind	Female	28	5-10	6+	1	Suburban
Lori	Female	30	16+	6+	K	Suburban

Study participants consisted of eight elementary-school teachers and one high-school teacher. Of the elementary-school teachers, two taught kindergarten, two taught first grade, three taught second grade, and one taught grades four and five. Their districts of employment included one urban district, two suburban districts, and four rural districts. Of the suburban teachers, Charlotte, Allison, and Rosalind taught in the same district. All nine participants taught in public schools, with one being a charter school. Two participants taught students in multiple grades and all but one had hosted a teacher candidate before the current semester.

Haley was a 15-year veteran teacher at the time of the study, with certifications in grades 6-12 social studies. While she has had only had one student teacher in her current district, she hosted several student teachers in her former district, where she taught for 13 years of her career.

Violet had taught for 29 years, with 28 in the same district, and she had been looking forward to having a teacher candidate. She had already taught grades 2-6 and this was her second year as a second-grade teacher.

Charlotte had taught for 17 years and is certified in K-6, early childhood, and K-12 administration. This was her first year teaching second grade, and she had spent most of her career teaching third grade. Previously, she had also taken advantage of a district-university program that met throughout the year and focused on cognitive coaching.

Allison had taught for 20 years in the, district and this was her third year teaching kindergarten. Before that, due to budget cuts and realignments, she had been moved

several times; other than kindergarten, she has taught preschool, first, second, fourth, sixth, and seventh grades.

Jennifer was a first-time mentor teacher at the time of the study, who had been teaching first grade for eight years total, and in her current district for six years. She began her teaching career in Texas, where she completed her student teaching in a kindergarten classroom.

Mark had taught second grade for 26 years in the same district. He was also a coach at the local secondary school.

Rosie taught at a charter school where the students looped or stayed with the same teacher for two years. She had taught for 19 years, with 16 in her current school. She taught preschool as well as grades 4 and 5. At the time of the interviews, she was a lead teacher within the school.

Rosalind had taught for 28 years, with 27 in the same district. Within that district, she has worked in three different schools and at the time of the interviews, she was in the process of changing schools for a fourth time due to district consolidation. She had taught one year of kindergarten and one year of second grade, with the remaining years in the first grade.

Lori had taught for 30 years, with 20 years in kindergarten and 10 in preschool. She was certified in early childhood family education, kindergarten, and grades 1-6, and she had participated in three student-teaching experiences, one for each certification area.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative phenomenology involves reducing the information to significant quotes or statements and then combining those statements into themes (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Those themes are used to develop a textural analysis of what participants experienced, followed by a structural analysis of how they experienced these phenomena to gain an understanding of the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2013). Using an inductive approach like the one Patton (2015) and Creswell (2013) have described, in the first round of coding all data were coded by hand with color highlighting to identify significant phrases or sentences that pertained directly to the lived experience of mentoring a teacher candidate. After the data were hand-coded, I used Atlas.ti data-analysis software to code a second time. The results of both analyses yielded 4 themes and 21 subthemes, which are included in the following list. These themes and subthemes will be explored in further detail in the order they are listed:

1. Mentor teacher experience and its effect on mentoring practice:
    - Student-teaching experience of mentor teacher.
    - Motivation for serving as a mentor teacher.
    - Preparation and training for mentor teacher role.
    - Mentor teacher understandings of the role and responsibilities.
2. Mentor teacher perspectives about their community of practice:
    - Working with colleagues.
    - Climate and culture.
3. Mentor teacher actions during student teaching:

- Reflection on mentor teacher practice.
- Reflection on teacher candidate practice.
- Coaching actions of mentor teachers.
- Mentoring actions of mentor teachers.
- Development of coaching/mentoring skills.
- Control and power in the classroom.
- Transmission versus transformation.
- Co-teaching.
- Planning time.

4. Reflection on the role of a mentor teacher.
    - Impacts on serving as a mentor teacher on the community of practice.
    - Advice to colleagues.
    - Role of mentor teacher today.
    - Andragogy versus pedagogy.
    - External coaching/mentoring/supervision.
    - Areas of difficulty.

Discrepant Cases

Although participants' responses in this study varied based on their unique levels of training and experience as mentor teachers, I did not find evidence of discrepant cases. Because all participants were public-school teachers who met state and university requirements to serve as mentor teachers and they had hosted teacher candidates who successfully completed the student-teaching semester, there were no outliers who had

shorter amounts of time to work with their teacher candidates. Although participants cited varying quality in their own student-teaching experiences, all participants completed traditional university-based teacher-preparation programs themselves, which provided a basis for understanding the mentor teacher experience. Responses to the interview questions were varied within an acceptable range and were consistent with other participants in the group.

Results

The data collected from three rounds of interviews provided a wealth of information about the experience of serving as a mentor teacher. After each round of interviews, which examined a different part of each teacher's mentor teacher experience, participants had time to reflect and think deeply about their practice in a way they might not have done previously. The data collected emerged into four themes and 21 subthemes, which connected to the three overarching research questions. Each subtheme is organized to show the relevance and frequency of mentor teachers' responses on that subject.

Theme 1: Mentor Teacher Experience and Its Effect on Mentoring Practice

All the participants in this study had completed a traditional university-based teacher-preparation program as a part of their certification process. Each participant was asked to share his or her own journey of becoming a teacher, paying particular attention to the student-teaching experience. After describing their student-teaching experiences, teachers were asked to share something they had learned through their experiences. Finally, they were asked why they had agreed to host a teacher candidate in the previous

semester and if they had received any training prior to serving in a mentor teacher capacity. The key takeaway is that the participant teachers had a wide variety of experiences as student teachers, and those experiences influenced their beliefs about mentoring teacher candidates. The next section provides results from the data-collection process and relates to Research Question 1: How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching? The data are used to explore participants' perspectives about why it was worth participating as a mentor teacher, how a mentor teacher's participation is recognizable as competence, and how changing ability and learning help an individual experience the world as meaningful.

Student teaching experience of mentor teacher. To understand how mentor teachers understand their role and determine if they used the same methods to train their teacher candidates as they had experienced as candidates, it was necessary to investigate the mentor teachers' student-teaching experiences. None of the mentor teachers had experienced a co-teaching model during their own student teaching, instead utilizing the traditional takeover model. In the traditional student-teaching model, also known as the takeover model, university personnel typically expect mentor teachers to step aside and let teacher candidates learn to teach by doing. In this model, the teacher candidate observes the mentor teacher for a few weeks and then gradually takes over control of the classroom, while the mentor teacher retreats into the background or leaves the room (Clarke et al., 2014). All the participants in this study had gone through a university-based program and experienced this takeover model. However, the degree to which the model was used varied from teacher to teacher. Some participants reported that when

they were teacher candidates, they had taken over teaching responsibilities from the beginning of student teaching, with the idea that total submersion would mimic what they would experience as first-year teachers. Other participants described their student-teaching experience as one in which their mentor teachers were not cooperative typically and hesitated to give up control of their classrooms to allow someone to learn how to teach. These teachers were not willing to recede into the background, perhaps because they understood student teaching only lasted 7-15 weeks on average, after which they would have to take back their classrooms, reestablish rules and procedures, and catch their students up on learning.

Participants in this study described their own student-teaching experiences, which varied in quality, as ranging from having limited control to having complete control of the classroom. Those participant teachers who had little control in their student-teaching classrooms because of domineering mentor teachers reported the strongest negative experiences. While most participant teachers had the classroom turned over to them during their own student teaching, there was no consensus on whether that model was the most effective method of training teacher candidates. Some said being on their own in a classroom offered freedom, while others felt overwhelmed and abandoned by the experience. In total, six out of the nine participants reported some negative aspects of the takeover model, including a lack of feedback because their teachers left the room or were going through personal issues and the underdevelopment of classroom-management skills. A common theme among participant teachers who had negative experiences during their own student teaching, regardless of whether they felt they had too much or too little

control, was that they made a conscious effort to give their own teacher candidates better and more balanced experiences than what they had experienced themselves.

Rosie had a good experience during her own student teaching. She described how her own mentor teacher had fostered her independence:

> My student teacher experience was incredible, because she [mentor teacher] gave me a lot of responsibility early on. I learned right away what I needed to do. I went forward, she would even leave the room, and she would even be gone for a little while.

Haley had experienced two placements in different grade levels for her certification, and she found the idea of the takeover approach with one of her mentor teachers beneficial:

> One [mentor teacher] was a younger, like thirties, gentleman, who was all about turning it over and a sink-or-swim mentality. He also coached and was very excited to have more time to dedicate to coaching than his classroom. There were certain groups of students that I think he was ready to get a break from. I was just ready to have the opportunity to see if all my thoughts about what my classroom would look like one day, how they would pan out in the real world. […] It was mostly a turnover model, not a ton of collaboration in that first one with my supervising teacher, with that classroom teacher. I felt supported at the same time, and I had a lot of freedom. I enjoyed that.

The idea of being left alone during student teaching to learn by submersion was and is a common practice in the traditional takeover model, but everyone did not see it as beneficial. Violet claimed,

> Well, I didn't really realize that my student teaching experience wasn't as good as it could have been until I was mentoring this year. […] He gave me a lot of space as to what I wanted to do, but he didn't always give a lot of guidance on how to get there.

Of those teachers that found the student-teaching experience less than favorable, one of the primary reasons was that the mentor teacher had exercised too much control. Mark explained his student teaching this way:

> I had my desk at the back of the class. I never took over the class. When it was my turn to teach math, Mrs. _____ would have me teach math. Then I would go back and sit down. Then she would take her class back. Then when it was my turn to teach a language arts unit or a social studies unit, I would teach and then I would go back to my chair and sit down and she would take the class back. I never really had the class myself. I just would teach bits and pieces and that's kind of how she did.

Jennifer had completed her student teaching in another state, where student obedience to the rules took precedence over learning. She described the teachers as much more abrasive and "in the kids' faces a lot." Student teaching shaped her perspective on teaching and learning: "I knew I wanted to be a teacher, but not like that. This is not how I want to be. Mean. They were kindergartners."

Whether the participants had positive or negative student-teaching experiences, it was clear these experience had shaped their understanding of student teaching and the role the mentor teacher should play.

Motivation for serving as a mentor teacher. Participants in this study became mentor teachers when they responded to an email sent by MSU to the schools asking if eligible teachers would be willing to host a teacher candidate. There were several reasons participants served as mentor teachers, including personal satisfaction and the belief that the work was an investment in the future of the profession. When teachers were questioned about why they had chosen to host a teacher candidate, three participants discussed how much they enjoyed helping teacher candidates and took the perspective of nurturer. Of the three teachers that needed to be persuaded to take a teacher candidate, two reported they were hesitant because of uncertainty, while one did not sign up because she had hosted a teacher candidate the semester before. The final three teachers believed serving as a mentor teacher would provide a reciprocal learning experience that would be a self-development opportunity, and they were eager to learn from their teacher candidates. Table 3 provides a summary of participants' responses about why they decided to serve as mentor teachers.

Table 3

Motivation for Serving as a Mentor Teacher

Reasons given for hosting a mentor teacher	Quotation
Personal satisfaction	‘Cause we need people who care. You have to love what you do, ‘cause this [teaching] is not for everyone. It really isn''t an easy job. (Lori)
	I like to help them and do what I can so that they have a successful student teaching but also get off to a good start. (Rosalind)
	Helping someone else get a perspective and a positive experience. (Rosie)
	I enjoy it, and so it is something I usually do once a year as a way to give back to the profession. I think I enjoy doing that. (Charlotte)
Had to be persuaded	It was [my principal] saying, “Hey, we got someone that’s really good. She could use the classroom-management piece, which you’re strong at. So, can you take her?” I said, “Sure.” (Mark)
	I got the email last year about taking student teachers. I didn’t respond, because I thought, “I’m still new.” That plea, “Please, we need another cooperating teacher,” I thought, “Okay, sure.” (Haley)
	This year was a little bit different. I hadn’t signed up, and this was a situation where MSU reached out to me to work with this specific teacher candidate, and that’s how I got a student teacher this year, by having them reach out to me. (Charlotte)
Like to learn	But also, I think I can learn some things from them, too. I know I can. So that’s been good. And it helps to keep you up on different things. (Rosalind)
	When I signed up to have a teacher candidate, I knew that I wanted to learn some technology skills. I had a list that I had her teach me how to do. I said, “I want to know this, this, and this.” Throughout the semester, she helped me manage software. (Violet)
	But I’m interested to hear her outtake on it, because you get in the habit of doing things a certain way, and so you just do them that way. There’s always better or different ways to do it. It’ll just be interesting to see what having another person in here brings to that. (Jennifer)

Preparation and training for mentor teacher role. During their first interviews, teachers were asked about how prepared they had felt to take on the role of mentor teacher and if they had received any formal or informal training for the role. When asked about how prepared they had felt, not all teachers felt they had the qualifications to do so. While most teachers claimed they felt prepared because of the number of teacher candidates they had hosted previously, Jennifer and Mark expressed apprehension about their preparation due to a lack of experience. On the topic of training, levels and types of experiences varied among the teachers. Five cited the experience of hosting multiple teacher candidates and learning through trial and error, two more had received cognitive coaching training as part of leadership training, and two cited coaching training from sports. Table 4 provides examples of mentor teachers' perspectives on their preparation and training to serve as mentor teachers.

In the absence of formal coaching and mentor training, mentor teachers drew from their life experiences and professional-development opportunities, but they lacked the feedback they needed to improve their practice. One surprising finding was that Violet and Mark cited other experiences (coaching sports and training as a yoga teacher) as instrumental in their understanding of how to mentor teacher candidates. These nontraditional methods of training provided alternative ways of understanding adult learning, communication, and collaboration skills that were transferrable to a classroom setting.

Table 4

Preparation and Training for Mentor Teacher Role

Description of preparation and training for mentor teacher role	Quotation
Preparedness to be a mentor teacher	I feel pretty well-prepared. I've had student teachers for a number of years, so I feel prepared. […] I don't think I was ever formally taught, so it was just kind of trial and error and what worked well. (Allison) Not very, I guess. I mean, you don't really get any training. They're just like, "Do you want a teacher?", and you say yes. Then two weeks later you get an email saying, "Here's your person's name. They'll contact you." Then the first day they show up and you're like, "Hey, you're here." (Jennifer) I went to the co-teaching seminar that we had at the high school, and that helped a lot. My student-teaching experience was, I teach and the student teacher sits in the back and observes. Then you jump in slowly, and then you eventually are taking over the class. But they kind of wanted us to right away start working together, and so that was very helpful. I think that helped me kind of put my mind at ease that I was hopefully going to do a good job. I really didn't read up on anything or draw from any resource. I'm a head coach in the district, as well, and I think that one of the things that I excel at as a head coach is, I try to empower all of my assistant coaches to feel like they are just as important as me. So I think it was kind of an easy transition for me to take her in. (Mark)
Learning to be a mentor teacher through experience	I think what I did was with that very first student teacher, I just treated them like a wannabe colleague, someone who had passion and promise and just needed some support getting there, and saw them as someone who had an incredible amount of potential. (Lori) You would have the book from [MSU], but you learn by doing and trial and error sometimes. […] But also […] following their guidelines, of course. (Rosalind)
Training for the role of mentor teacher	I have had cognitive coaching training, as well, which is something that definitely would be used as a mentor teacher. I know we've tried to pull that in with some of the just teacher-mentoring program[s] and our district, as well. I'm the head of that program for our district. (Charlotte) I've taken a lot of cognitive coaching. I've taken the Marzano, the art and science of teaching. And so there have been a lot of ways to learn to listen and to learn to also ask questions that get people thinking and reflecting more. So, I do think that, yes, the lead teacher part, there's a lot of required training that I've had to take that has really been beneficial to being a mentor. (Rosie)

(table continues)

Description of preparation and training for mentor teacher role	Quotation
	My training's fine. Not to say that there aren't little hiccups or things that might happen. I feel like I have a pretty good handle through classes, and just reading journals, and staying abreast of what's going on in education. I feel like I have a pretty good handle on what they need to do, what they're expected to do. I do appreciate the universities sending out information beforehand in terms of what their student teachers are expected to get out of that experience. That always clarifies things. (Haley)
Nontraditional training applied to mentoring a teacher candidate	At the same time, what's happening for me and my personal life that I've become […] a yoga instructor. I practice yoga every day. That has changed me a little bit. That's part of where I've found some of the strength to work with this other adult and not the strength to teach and train, but to let go and let the adult be who they are. (Violet)

Mentor teacher understandings of the role and responsibilities. Mentor teachers were asked to explain what they had believed the mentor teacher's role to be prior to hosting their teacher candidates. Six also hosted different teacher candidates in the fall semester, which meant they had teacher candidates in the classroom with them all year. Their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of hosting a teacher candidate was to repeat the practices and techniques they had used in previous semesters, including giving teacher candidates space to apply and refine their skills. This approach could take the form of transmission, where the teacher candidate was expected to observe and demonstrate the mentor teacher's strategies and techniques, or transformation, where the mentor teacher provides the space and experiences to allow the teacher candidate to develop his or her own teacher persona.

The teachers who had not worked with a teacher candidate in several years or those who had mentored few or no teacher candidates before the most recent semester looked to their own student-teaching experiences as a model before learning about co-teaching with a teacher candidate. After learning about co-teaching, the mentor teachers who had never cotaught reported being eager to try a model that was different from their own experience. Table 5 shows mentor teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities prior to the beginning of student teaching.

One of the revelations on this topic that came through interviewing participants was how mentor teachers' perspectives changed after receiving information about co-teaching. Whether attending a one-day workshop or reading written information the EPP provided them about the mentor teacher's roles and expectations in a co-teaching model, the mentor teachers who reported they did not have great experiences during their own student-teaching learned information that made it possible to change their approaches when working with their own teacher candidates.

Table 5

Mentor Teachers' Perceptions of their Roles and Responsibilities Prior to Student Teaching

Description of roles and responsibilities	Quotation
Teacher candidate development and support	I would say that the role for a mentor teacher would be to provide learning opportunities for teacher candidates to provide an environment for them to apply skills, refine their skills, a way to develop who they are as a teacher. I look at a mentor teacher as maybe a facilitator of teaching. I don't want the teacher candidates to be me, the only teacher, and the only teaching philosophy. But I do think my role is to allow room for them to come learn and grow into who they will be as a teacher. And my job is to make sure they understand the standards, the curriculum we have, the different requirements that we have to do as teachers, but then allow them a space where they can put their spin on it, their own personality into their lessons and delivery. And then to provide them little kiddos to build relationships with and apply all that they've learned. (Charlotte)
	So I feel like my sole responsibility, really, is to get them ready to have their own classroom in only a few short months after they're done with me, and just to have the confidence and have the skills to be able to get going and at least get a good start. […] But just giving them a lot of experiences, too, and allowing them to [get up and try things]. (Allison)
	It's to provide modeling, but then also provide opportunity for them to learn what it is that they need to learn and learn what it is they need more of. Also, the relationship piece to me is extremely important, because these kids need a place to feel important and safe, you know? (Rosie)
	So that's what I expected my role to be, was just to be really transparent and open and supportive. And hopefully guide her and hopefully she picks up on your good habits and then telling her, "Maybe this isn't the best practice, so don't do that." Give her a different, better way to do it. (Jennifer)
Different than mentor teacher's own student teaching	I wasn't really sure, but after I agreed to work with [the student teacher], then the university did send me some information, a definition of what a cooperating teacher was. I was kind of intrigued on that because it was different than my experience when I was being trained. (Violet)
	Well, you know, coming from my experience as a student teacher, I didn't necessarily want the student teacher that I had to have that experience, but I thought it would be, she sits and observes for a couple weeks, then she takes on a lesson here and there and gets acclimated to what we're doing. Then maybe like the last week, she can take over and run the class. Then I just kind of sit and observe. That's kind of what I thought the model would be. […] But then, when I went to the co-teaching training […], I was surprised at what they wanted us to do. So she wanted to observe the first day, but I think we just jumped in and started teaching together right away. (Mark)
	[MSU] had a workshop on cooperating teachers, where I was like, "Oh, it's different." Before, it was, the students would come and they would watch. It was kind of a hands-off approach. The teacher did more of the teaching, and then gradually they kind of led up to it. Now, it's like, boom, they're in, which is the way it should be because you learn by doing. (Lori)

Theme 2: Mentor Teachers' Perspectives about Their Communities of Practice

The second theme is related to mentor teachers and their communities of practice. In school settings, communities of practice help establish norms for teaching and can be a grade-level team, a subject-specific department, or even the entire faculty if the school is small. According to Wenger (1998), when new people join a community of practice, there is a generational shift. Those that were new and had a mentor recently now find themselves mentoring and demonstrating competence. These mentors forge new identities as their perspective changes with experience and practice (Wenger, 1998).

While the idea of mutual engagement to negotiate meaning is often seen as positive, communities of practice are not always benevolent, particularly if the members enforce an unproductive status quo and ignore external factors that require growth in practice. If teachers are isolated from other practitioners and deal only with issues in their own classrooms, they can fail to create connections beyond themselves (Wenger, 1998). Working with a teacher candidate is seen as a sign of competent practice and a way to develop teacher leadership while remaining in the classroom, but if the culture and climate of teaching is such that it does not allow teachers to assert their educational authority and expertise, then the role of a mentor teacher will be limited (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

Two subthemes emerged in this study that explore the idea of a community of practice. In the first subtheme of working with colleagues, the data illustrate the relationship the mentor teachers had with members of their communities of practice. The second subtheme, climate and culture, relates to the general school or district

environment and is evident in its employees' morale. In most cases, climate and culture is influenced by building and district leadership and reflected in policies and attitudes about professional development. This theme relates to RQ1 on mentor teachers' initial expectations about their roles because a community of practice sets the norms for what is considered competent in the profession. As a mentor teacher negotiates meaning around his or her role as such, it is important to explore how the mentor teacher perceives and participates in his or her community of practice. According to Wenger (1998), negotiated meaning is not just participation, but also reification, or giving form to experience through the policies, procedures, and objects created to make the community of practice's ideas and beliefs into a concrete object. Examining a mentor teacher's relationship to his or her community of practice is necessary to explore how that mentor teacher understands the possibilities for his or her own growth potential and feels about bringing newcomers into the community of practice.

Working with colleagues. The teachers that participated in this study reported a variety of experiences with their communities of practice. Table 6 shows mentor teacher perspectives about working with colleagues. One participant served as the lead teacher and took charge of her community of practice but did not mention other members' contributions, making it difficult to ascertain how collaborative the community was. Several teachers mentioned sharing, whether professionally or personally, as one of the strengths of working with colleagues. The need to establish a connection of caring and respect is important in a relationship of collaboration and communication where there is significant reflection and troubleshooting.

Most teacher participants reported the positive aspects of their communities of practice and had at least one other colleague with whom they worked closely. However, not all communities of practice were seen as productive. Haley discussed her community as “in transition” and not functioning effectively. She was new to the district and still on the periphery of the community of practice, and she claimed that when she tried to introduce innovation, the rest of the community was resistant.

Table 6

Working with Colleagues

Description of working with colleagues in a community of practice	Quotation
In charge of the community	We have a staff of six classroom teachers and one special-education teacher. We have all of our learning communities together. We have done so many things over the years. I am one of the lead teachers here. The lead teachers develop and facilitate our professional learning communities. That is the beautiful part about having such a small staff is that we all get to learn the same thing at the same time. We all get to hear the message, or we all get to be confused at the same time. (Rosie)
Supportive community	I think probably the most beneficial to me is my colleague. We team on everything. […] And it's all informal, just on our own. We usually eat lunch together every day. We plan together, our newsletters are together. And so she's the one that I go to if […], "So-and-So just is not getting this, and what have you tried?" And she does the same and [we] consult on behaviors and things like that. […] So we have building-wide, we have PLCs. And our PLCs actually all get together once a month to share data with the other PLCs. (Allison)
	We [grade-level teachers] just naturally work together at lunches or after school. We all find the value in collaborating together, and so, just naturally, we make sure we have the time for that, make sure we're all on the same page and sharing and helping each other out. And then, also we use our staff-development dollars quite often to bring in subs for collaboration days. Or we can use our staff-development time outside of our contract hours to get together. (Charlotte)
	We [first-, second-, and third-grade teachers] share things that we do in our class that we do well. I think that sharing piece is probably our strongest area of our PLC that we give a lot. Teachers are really willing to help everyone get better. Like, we say, "Our comprehension is low," and then someone will say, "Well, I do this," and so then they share. (Mark)
Supportive outside of school	Three out of the four of us have been teaching together for 15 years. [...] I felt we had the strongest team out of any grade level. I mean, we could finish each other's sentences, and we're good friends outside of school. I think it makes a huge difference. […] You know, just to be able to support you outside of school, because there is life outside of here, is huge. (Lori)
Not productive	Our community of practice is in a state of transition right now in our department. We have very different values and very different visions of where things are going to go in the future. […] There is an expectation for having common assessments and being more collaborative. There's some resistance on that and some hesitation on that for a variety of reasons. (Haley)

Climate and culture. The teachers in this study overwhelmingly reported negative climate and culture in their schools or districts, even if they saw their own communities of practice as positive (Table 7). Participants gave several reasons for these negative views, which ranged from fiscal issues to limited professional-development opportunities, and poor leadership. Budget cuts were one significant factor in a negative climate and culture. Budgetary problems can result from politics, a shrinking tax base, or poor fiscal management, and they are often beyond a teacher's control. Allison cited being moved multiple times during her career in the district, which made it difficult to establish expertise in one area. Another teacher had such a negative experience that she went off the record when it came time to discuss school climate. As someone who had been transferred multiple times throughout her career and was in the process of being transferred again at the end of the school year because the school was closing, her morale was low and she reported that the lack of community was because the teachers lacked agency that allowed them to be part of the change in a positive manner. Rosalind and Jennifer spoke of the lack of choice in what their communities were learning.

Table 7

Climate and Culture

Perspectives on district climate and culture	Quotation
Budget	My first year was very hard and very stressful. And then that year was the year that then, it seemed like we started the budget cuts. And it just has kept coming every year. [...] So I've been moved a lot. I was cut the first several years, just based on numbers. [...] In this district, […] I've taught kindergarten, preschool, then […] second and fourth. And then I did Title I kindergarten again. Then I was cut. I got moved to seventh grade. […] The following year, foreign language was cut, and so I was moved to 6th grade to accommodate resulting moves. And then when I was on maternity leave, they cut social studies completely. […] So, then I got moved back down to first grade, and then after first grade, second grade for several years. And then, we lost a section of second grade after my sixth or seventh year, and then I got moved back down to kindergarten. […] Yeah, I mean, now we're in this budget-cutting nightmare. Again, all of our staff-development money is frozen right now, and so we're kind of going through that. (Allison)
	Our learning levy has failed, our referendums have failed. This year it finally passed, so now they're trying to figure out what to do, how to spend the money wisely […] and what we got from the community. I think our district has had a lot of issues with finding something, like the next something, and hammering on that for a year or two and then […], "Now we're going to do this." That's frustrating because you never feel like you get enough time to really get good at something, because then they're turning around and changing it. (Lori)
Lack of leadership	Probably in the last ten years, we've had four principals. Every time somebody comes in, you've got to start all over again. We've had some good ones and we've had some that have just brought the morale as low as you can go, and those were horrible years. (Lori)
	As our weaknesses as a PLC become more evident, there are going to be some tough questions asked as to how in the heck did this go unnoticed, unchecked, unaddressed for so long? (Haley)
Lack of choice	[About professional development] But at times, at the beginning of the year, they'll say, "Okay, you can go to this one or this one or this one." But that has kind of dwindled where it's more like we're going to have a speaker, we'll do this, and then we're going to talk about guided reading with grades one and two or whatever. (Rosalind)
	So, we have our PLCs every Tuesday […] and […] typically it is just a grade-level and they're usually pretty structured. We have a success coach and she tells us what we need to talk about every day. […] She tells us what we should focus on and then we do the best we can with that. (Jennifer)

(table continues)

Perspectives on district climate and culture	Quotation
Successful climate	We have opportunities that if we want to apply for something [professional development] that comes in an email or something, we can. […] But yeah, we also have at staff meetings, we share. People share quite a bit on different things. Like my principal oftentimes says to me, "This teacher is doing this. Go observe them." (Mark)

Lori and Haley cited poor leadership where there was rapid turnover of administration or administration that turned a blind eye to unproductive habits that over time became practice. Lori's community served as a stabilizing unit and worked together to provide continuity of practice and troubleshoot problems despite the issues that came with continual changes in administration. Lori was able to provide her teacher candidate with a framework for how to collaborate effectively with grade-level peers in addition to the mentor-teacher candidate collaboration happening every day. In the case of Haley and the administration that turned a blind eye to unproductive habits, the result was a community of practice that was resistant to change. Because of this resistance, Haley shielded her candidate from the negative community and focused their collaboration on the one-on-one mentor-teacher candidate relationship rather than on the larger community of practice. However, not all participants felt their schools or districts fostered a negative climate and culture. Mark, the participant who felt supported by his district, repeatedly cited his principal's support, opportunities for learning, and meaningful collaboration as reasons the climate and culture at his school were positive.

One of the key takeaways from this theme is that a negative climate and culture do not necessarily indicate a dysfunctional community of practice. In fact, many of these teachers used their communities of practice as a means of dealing with the negative climate and culture and were successful in spite of the obstacles they faced.

Many of the teachers involved in this study sought to bring a teacher candidate into their community of practice to learn more than the mechanics of how to teach. Even though it was not overt, the teachers understood that survival as a teacher meant finding a community of practice that could help them grow as practitioners and navigate the obstacles established by factors beyond their control. The teachers who did not have a productive community of practice also used the opportunity as a teachable moment on what not to do as they sought to create new communities of practice with impressionable newcomers.

Theme 3: Mentor Teacher Actions during Student Teaching

This theme relates to mentor teachers' everyday actions during student teaching and how the opportunity of hosting a teacher candidate outside their normal community of practice influenced their growth and development as practitioners, coaches, or mentors. The subthemes reflect various practices and show how mentor teachers negotiated the meaning of their role through practice and reification of shared resources, frameworks, and perspectives. The subtheme on reflection on mentor teacher practice focused on whether teachers learned something while hosting a teacher candidate that allowed them to grow in their own practice. The subtheme on teacher candidate practice revealed the approach mentor teachers took when their candidates struggled to learn.

Mentor teachers' coaching actions focused on how the mentors utilized questioning strategies and knowledge of adult learning to provide instructional coaching. Mentoring actions focused on helping teacher candidates navigate professionalism and school policies and procedures.

The next subtheme on the development of coaching and mentoring skills emerged when mentor teachers were asked about how mentoring a teacher candidate had impacted their own practices and what new content or skills they learned. Hierarchical classroom structures are illustrated in the subtheme on control and power, which showed the degree to which mentor teachers were willing to relinquish control in a classroom and allow their teacher candidates to make mistakes and learn from them. The subtheme on transmission versus transformation focuses on how mentor teachers approached sharing resources. Mentor teachers' understandings and perceptions about co-teaching revealed their beliefs on the model and its use. Finally, the last subtheme on planning time focused on the importance of co-planning and when it was likely to occur.

The theme satisfies RQ2, which asks how mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching.

Reflecting on mentor teacher practice. When asked how mentoring a teacher candidate influenced their practices, all participants pointed to something that helped them think about their practice in a new way. In this subtheme, Jennifer and Allison discussed awareness to break them out of the cycle of routine. They were able to observe student behaviors they might not normally have seen when they were in front of the

classroom. Charlotte also mentioned awareness, stressing the pressure she felt to be a good role model because of the constant interactions involved in co-teaching. Mark discussed how direct interactions with the teacher candidate through the reflection process were a catalyst for him to change his practice. Rosie and Violet discussed the integration of new technology introduced by the teacher candidate. Table 8 explores teachers reflecting on their own practice after hosting a teacher candidate.

A significant finding in this subtheme is that every teacher could describe how hosting a teacher candidate helped them improve an aspect of their practice that would not have happened in their normal communities of practice, regardless of whether the teacher candidate the mentor teacher hosted had a successful student-teaching experience.

Table 8
Reflecting on Mentor Teacher Practice

Description of what the mentor teacher learned about his or her practice.	Quotation
Gaining new perspective	I think it's [mentoring a student teacher] a good experience because it does make you more aware of your teaching, and I think as teachers, if you just do the same thing every year, you kind of get stuck. [...] So, it kind of shakes things up a little bit, makes you more aware of why you're doing what you're doing, and makes you more conscious about what you're doing. (Jennifer)
	I think it's [mentoring a teacher candidate has influenced practice…] in a couple ways. You can see things when you step back and you're observing. You see things […] that you don't always see when you're up front, so that's always really nice to kind of get that different perspective. […] I always think about how much I really love it [teaching], and you miss it a little bit when you're not engaged in it. (Allison)
Technology	Well, I learned about Kahoot. I guess some of the newer technology out there, the newer things that we don't necessarily always get to keep up on. (Rosie)
	Usually I walk away from this experience with a few new resources, whether it's a website or an activity. (Haley)
	When I signed up to have a student teacher, I knew that I wanted to learn some technology skills. I had a list that I had her teach me how to do. I said, "I want to know this, this, and this." Throughout the semester, she helped me manage software. (Violet)
Being a good role model	I feel like I wanna' make sure I'm on top of the latest research so I can share that with them. […] There's kind of a pressure there to constantly be modeling that really great process, that practice. I think it's […] stepped me out of my comfort zone to try some new things as they bring new ideas to me […] I think we can kind of get stuck in that cycle of doing things we're comfortable with or the things we know well, and I think a student teacher stretches me a little bit in my own classroom, in my own teaching practice, making sure that I am […] that class role model for them in all areas of teaching, instructional strategies, behavior management, classroom management, technology integration. (Charlotte)
Reflection as a catalyst to change	I think it [being a mentor teacher] helped me to be even more aware of how organized I need to be. […] I made some huge organizational improvements. I learned some things from my student-teacher that helped me as well. […] I think that we had a lot of conversations with why I handle this situation with a child a certain way and what she could do, and then bounce ideas back and forth as far as classroom management […] when we would have those conversations and she would pop in new ideas. Yeah, I think it made me reflect, for sure, maybe doing some things better. (Mark)

Reflecting on teacher candidate practice. The next subtheme of reflecting on teacher candidate practice speaks to how the mentor teachers reflected on their candidates' progress. Most teacher candidates face setbacks as well as successes during student teaching, and reflecting on how to help a teacher candidate demonstrates how mentor teachers approached their role. It was especially telling if the mentor teachers approached teacher candidate actions as an immediate problem to be solved or if they thought about failure in the larger context of learning, including their role in their candidates' actions. The mentor teachers in this group were willing to explore solutions beyond their own experiences and coach the teacher candidates. Among the participants, Lori, Violet, and Allison spoke about the importance of learning from failure and the ability to recover. These mentor teachers looked beyond the immediate setbacks and knew that learning was a part of growth and identity formation. Another veteran teacher, Charlotte, spoke about the importance of asking questions and listening, which is a key to educative mentoring and effective instructional coaching. Mark and Rosie expressed a combination of asking questions and providing answers when it came to classroom-management issues. Jennifer had a hard time letting go of a favorite subject area in which she had extensive training, so she did all the work in that subject. While providing instruction about how to handle certain situations might be expedient, it did not provide her teacher candidate with a rationale for the behavior or the ability to recover and learn. Jennifer felt her approach benefitted the teacher candidate, but it did not allow the teacher candidate to master the material independently. Table 9 provides mentor teacher perspectives on teacher candidate practice.

Table 9

Reflecting on Teacher Candidate Practice

Description of mentor teacher actions when teacher candidate struggled	Quotation
Allowing failure in order to learn	You could sense her comfort level wasn't super high just because this age of child, just she wasn't used to working with. […] I really like to stress with student teachers that what you see me do might not work for you and that's okay. You need to try and figure out what works and what doesn't, and things are going to work for a while and then they're not, so you're just always changing things. If you're the type of person who is really focused on sticking to the plan, you might want to rethink at least kindergarten, because your day never ends up how you picture it in the morning and you have to be okay with that. (Lori) She was very competent and she was always asking me questions about both the what and the why. She was always making sure it was aligned with standards. […] She came knowing that the standards were the focus. […] The other piece was that I felt it was okay that I let her make some mistakes and to fail. Not in a complete total "I'm in tears" failing, but to make some of her own mistakes. I told her at the beginning, I said, "You're not going to be able to break anyone. No one is going to be broken if things don't go well." She has the right demeanor and the rapport with the students that I knew she wasn't going to be hurting anyone emotionally, either. (Violet) I do feel like it's really interesting to me how some student teachers can come in and seem really prepared […] and then some come in and they are not […] and you expect them to learn along the way and when you learn, you make mistakes and things like that, […] that you expect, but some that just come in and just really have, seem disengaged from kids and some that come in and […] still struggle to even create a lesson plan, and that's really frustrating because, you know, we expect them to come in and be ready, and then they're not as hard. Disposition is a huge, huge, huge part of it. (Allison)
Asking questions	For me, trying to understand where they're at and what they understand and how they're feeling, what they're seeing, I ask a lot of questions, and then allow them to ask questions as well, too. I encourage them to have a notebook and just jot things down all day long as they think of it. The highs, the lows, questions, whatever they might feel we need to talk about or discuss before the next day. I feel sometimes we need to remove ourselves before we can really hammer. You know, it's just fresher if you can get out, get the fresh air, exercise, or whatever it might be that you might need to do. (Charlotte)

(table continues)

Description of mentor teacher actions when teacher candidate struggled.	Quotations
Telling and asking	When we got together, I typically would start with, "How did you feel that went?" […] Obviously, in the early going, classroom management was a struggle, so we reflected a lot on that. [Teacher candidate] was really good with the pedagogy of teaching, but handling the kids, I think, was the key where we did a lot of reflecting. [...] But we also would brainstorm ideas on what could we do better. [Teacher candidate] was good at coming up with some new online things, resources, and different things […] that she had been trained in, so we started those conversations. I would say probably it was actually kind of like a 50-50, I think. I really think that I tried to not tell her too much and just force-feed too much to her. It was more about, like I said, "How did you feel that went?" Then we would talk about it. (Mark) I mean, after a period of time, I try not to step in as much in the discipline area. [...] So I try to allow her some of that on her own. […] But [if I step in [with the students] it isn't her getting control of their behavior or their motivation. […If teacher candidate struggled] I'd be involved with more like, "Let me help you with the problem." But I try to not step in as much on the discipline part, because this is their [teacher candidate's] learning opportunity. Gotta' be tough. Be tough. And sometimes you're sitting there going, "I would like to step in." (Rosie)
Telling rather than asking	But reading is kind of my thing. Grammar and phonetics and all that. It was really hard for me to watch her try to teach it, because I felt like she didn't have the background that I had, and so that's where we did a lot of the co-teaching. I would do either the planning and she would teach it, and then we would […] be up there together doing it side by side. Or she just observed a lot. […] But otherwise, she just did basically whatever I did. […] I think it was helpful for her. She even said, "I didn't know any of that. I didn't know how to teach reading." I was like, "Yes, this is how, or it's one way to teach reading." I felt it did benefit her. (Jennifer)

The way mentor teachers approached teacher candidate learning was not consistent. While the majority of mentor teachers knew the importance of failure, reflection, and growth, it was not always easy for them to balance teacher candidate learning with student learning. When Jennifer took over planning and teaching reading because the teacher candidate did not demonstrate sufficient expertise, she thought taking control of planning and instruction would be beneficial for the teacher candidate and even

remarked that hers was only one way of teaching reading, but she never allowed the teacher candidate to learn for herself or try other options.

Coaching actions of mentor teachers. When asked about their everyday practices with their teacher candidates, all teacher participants spoke about providing feedback for their teacher candidates. Allison, Haley, Charlotte, Rosalind, and Rosie cited guiding reflection beyond the lesson to think about student learning and their teacher candidates' professional growth. Mark focused his guided reflection strategies on lesson planning. While the reflection varied in focus from teacher candidate growth and student learning to planning, all the mentor teachers except Jennifer exhibited coaching behaviors that included an understanding adult learning and guided reflection. Jennifer was an active collaborator when it came to planning and teaching lessons, but her lack of knowledge in adult learning and coaching meant she often explained how she taught to provide examples for the teacher candidate but did not ask the teacher candidate questions to guide reflection and arrive at his or her own conclusions. Table 10 provides examples of the mentor teachers' coaching actions.

Table 10

Coaching Actions of Mentor Teachers

Description of coaching actions	Quotation
Guiding reflection about teacher candidate growth and student learning	We always reflect on the day. Just kind of, "What did you think about it?" Then, "What do you think went well? What do we want to do a little bit differently?" […] "How did that feel?" Sometimes, too, when a student teacher has a really good lesson, and maybe they've been struggling and maybe not, but you can get that feeling of, "That felt so good. That was so fun," or, "I saw the light bulb go off," or, "This one was really pushing back today, and I didn't know what to do, and it felt kind of yucky." So just a lot of conversation. […] Then, thinking ahead to the next day, "What are you gonna' be working on tonight?" (Allison) Usually as soon as the students are out the door I'll say, "How did that feel? What do you think of that lesson? Do you think that the students learned what they needed to learn? Were there any classroom-management behavior issues that came up that you want to talk about?" So even if maybe that wasn't on the radar, just getting them used to thinking about "Maybe that should be on my radar." (Haley) You know, questioning is super important. I mean, just to question and have those teacher candidates reflect on themselves, and I think they know and they realize and it just is so much better when they can come up with the problem rather than being told what the problem was, and that's definitely my approach. I don't want to say, "Oh, that lesson was horrible," or, "They were completely out of control," but just to question […] "How do you think it went? What were the highs, what were the lows? What would've changed to make it look like a really great lesson? "And so, I think just prompting questions is really the most helpful way and let them just reflect and think back on what needs to be different. (Charlotte) I start off with, "The world's your oyster." I say, "What you're going to get out of this is what you get into it." I feel that my role is not just one, but it's several. It's cheerleader, it's supervisor, it's encourager, which goes with cheerleading, but yet also it's one that's also sometimes silent so that they can figure it out themselves. My role is also to help them reflect. So, I guess be like a mirror, except "Okay, now you tell me. Okay. What was the best thing about your day? Tell me." Or, "Why do you think this lesson [...] Tell me about this lesson. Okay, why didn't it go so well?" (Rosalind) "Well, how do you feel the lesson went? What did you [...] How do you feel that they mastered the material? Or what do you think they need to work on?" And then we'd discuss what I saw, what she saw, and get an idea of who needs more instruction. (Rosie)

(table continues)

Description of Coaching Actions	Quotations
Guiding reflection on lesson	When we got together, I typically would start with a "How did you feel that went?" type of question so she could share what she thought. Obviously, in the early going, classroom management was a struggle, so we reflected a lot on that. She was pretty solid […] was really good with the pedagogy of teaching, but handling the kids, I think, was the key where we did a lot of reflecting on that and different tricks. But we also would brainstorm ideas on what could we do better. (Mark)
Collaboration but no reflection	Then the next two weeks she started taking over the responsibilities, so I gave her my lesson plan template and kind of filled in some of the things, but then let her fill in the rest of it. She would email those to me, and I would just check them and say, "Looks good. Looks like teaching." Then when she started teaching, I didn't really know at first what I would do when she was teaching. I chose to just kind of sit with the students. Whatever they were doing, I tried to do that, too. I think that helped the students realize that she was in charge, because I wasn't sitting behind her or standing off to the side. I was sitting with them, watching what she was doing. I think that kind of helped. (Jennifer)

While guiding reflection as a coaching strategy was an integral part of student teaching for those mentor teachers with coaching training or the experience of working with numerous student teachers over time, it was not a natural byproduct for the newest mentor teacher, who lacked both the training and experience of hosting teacher candidates.

Mentoring a teacher candidate. While coaching is about instruction and guiding reflection, mentoring addresses the broader support that a teacher candidate or novice teacher needs to deal with the stress and demands of learning to teach. While some kept the mentoring within the boundaries of the classroom and school, Lori, Rosalind, and Violet displayed nurturing behavior that spanned the personal and professional. Of the participants, all but Mark and Jennifer, the two with the least amount of experience as mentor teachers, demonstrated mentoring actions to varying degrees. Mark was a coach

and the little planning time his teaching team did have was spent on lessons or classroom management. Jennifer spent planning time talking about curriculum and lessons, as well. When asked about a typical day working with their teacher candidates, neither mentioned helping them navigate the broader issues of professionalism, policy, or procedures. Since all mentors but one also displayed coaching actions, it is important to recognize that teachers switch between coaching and mentoring stances depending on what supports are needed at the time. Coaching focuses on improving instruction, while mentoring deals with how to navigate both the spoken and unspoken rules of teaching in areas of policy, procedures, and professionalism. Table 11 provides glimpses into the mentoring these teachers provided their candidates and draws a distinction between professional and nurturing standpoints.

Table 11

Description of Mentoring Actions

Description of mentoring actions	Quotation
Mentoring beyond the classroom	During lunch we ate with the other staff and visited with everyone else, so that they could get to know the other teachers a little better. So, lunchtime was just strictly lunchtime. (Rosie)
	I like to do a little mock interview with my student teachers, and I think that comes both from my coursework, but also just the teacher-mentoring process that I've been a part of in our district. (Charlotte)
	Trying to give them those experiences, too, like, "You're the teacher, you need to do it all. The good, the bad, the ugly, not just plan that fun stuff, but then call out the kids when they're not doing what they need to." I thought she was actually very good with that. […] But again, empowering them, giving them those opportunities to do the good, the bad, the ugly. It's important. (Haley)

(table continues)

Description of mentoring actions	Quotations
	I feel like it's [lunchtime] a good way to kind of process our morning and then think about maybe even the afternoon based on our morning […] and just also trying to build relationship with that lunchtime, so not trying to make it all about school but more, "What'd you do this weekend?" and things like that. (Allison)
Mentoring as nurturing	We carpooled. Well, we take turns. She would drive one week, I drive the next week. We always had mini meetings on the way to work. As the senior in the car, I'd always try and make sure we did a little bit of just friendly conversation rather than just work conversation. Oftentimes, it was about work. (Violet)
	[I tell them] "Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands." I think I've become more, just more, sometimes a mother. […] And also, I always take them out to eat so I get to know them a little more. And a couple times actually I'll say. And they're broke college students. (Rosalind)
	They probably learned a lot more than they wanted to depending on what was going on. I think that made them feel like they were just like one of us, and they are. Yeah, oh yeah, every year I organize ringing the bells, the red kettle thing at Christmas, and we have like 20 people and we go and sing and we have margaritas before or whatever. We always invite the student teachers and they come and they have fun and it's like, "You're a part of a family here." (Lori)
Collaboration rather than mentoring	A lot of times our planning was, I would tell her, "Here's what you have to do." Then she would write it all down, and then when she went home, I guess she would look up what standard it was. Then she would email it to me. […] So, after school we would kind of, I would say maybe look at the next week and plan out tentatively for the week. I would show her, "For the next week, we're doing 6.1 through 6.4 in math. Here are the topics. Here's how I've typically done it. You can do whatever you want." Then each day she'd be like, "Okay, tomorrow I'm going to teach you this, and this is what I'm thinking." I'm like, "Yeah, that sounds good," or, "Maybe I wouldn't do it that way." (Jennifer)
	I think one of the reasons that [she] and I kind of clicked was I didn't try to shove things down her throat. It was more I tried to just be a teammate, real good teammate with her. And I think you have to be willing to share things back and forth and take her ideas and they have to have a high worth. (Mark)

There are some actions that all the mentor teachers undertook to acquaint the teacher candidates with the school, including reviewing discipline, fire-alarm procedures, and the unwritten rules of the teacher's lounge. Even though only seven of the nine participants mentioned mentoring actions when asked about the typical day they spent with their teacher candidates, mentoring still may have taken place. It just may not have been at the forefront of the mentor teacher's conscious recollection of his or her daily actions with the teacher candidate.

Development of coaching and mentoring skills. In the second round of interviews, mentor teachers were asked how mentoring a teacher candidate had impacted their own practice and what new content or skills they had learned. My goal was to find whether what they learned fell into the category of improving teaching practice or the category of developing coaching and mentoring skills. Allison discovered how to see her students from a different perspective and developed a deeper appreciation for teaching. She also learned new art and technology applications that she was able to implement in class. Mark and Jennifer both cited learning practical things, including the need to get more organized or be more consistent. Allison, Mark, and Jennifer discovered practical things about their teaching practice, but not necessarily about coaching and mentoring. However, Violet, Charlotte, and Rosie all took an introspective look at their roles as mentor teachers and reflected on their ability to let go to help teacher candidates grow. These teachers were thinking about aspects of coaching and mentoring rather than their own teaching practice. Table 12 describes what mentor teachers learned about their own practice after working with a teacher candidate.

It is interesting to note that when asked about the influence of the teacher candidate, the two teachers with the least experience as mentor teachers identified areas within their own practice that needed improvement, while the veteran teachers reflected on the experience in terms of coaching and mentoring.

Table 12

Development of Coaching and Mentoring Skills

What mentor teacher learned	Quotation
New perspective on students	You see things […] that you don't always see when you're up front, so that's always really nice, to kind of get that different perspective. [...] I always think about how much I really love it, and you miss it a little bit when you're not engaged in it. (Allison)
Art and technology	Technology, for sure. […] Art projects that they introduce that I've never done before that have been really fun or different painting strategies. Yeah, those are the ones that are coming to mind the most. If I were to be honest, I would say that the vast majority of the student teachers who I have had have not come in with a whole lot of skill or confidence. They are not ready at all to co-teach. (Allison)
Letting go	I had to practice letting go. I had that in mind before anyone came was that this is a great opportunity for me to let go. I'm on the downhill side of my career, so it's like, I have nothing that I need to prove to anyone. I can manage this job, now I need to be able to let go so that I can help someone else. To help someone else, I put in my mind that I'm working with an adult and that's not my job to convey everything I know but to be able to listen and to learn from that other adult. (Violet)
	I found that I can be very honest in a graceful way and we can learn and grow from struggles. This past student teacher I had, there was a lot of area of growth, and it's probably the first time where […] there were more negatives than positives to start. And I think I, if I would've known that, I would've hesitated. […] I do feel like I learned where I really can help people and, even the student teachers that might not come in that are natural and […] maybe need more support […] I found, sometimes I felt like it was interventions for that teacher candidate, where we needed to take a step back and I realized I could be creative and I really can help someone learn and grow. (Charlotte)
	I think I've learned that it is harder to check your own opinions and let them develop their own. […] I think when I was younger, maybe my opinions probably weren't as strong. And now, after experience and life […] making sure that they're learning on their own and I'm not giving my opinion. Part of it is the challenge of letting go of your classroom and your way of doing things. (Rosie)
Improve practical aspects of teaching	I just want to be maybe more consistent. There are days where you're like, "I don't really feel like teaching. Can I find a YouTube video?" But when she was watching, I would never do that. […] It definitely made me more prepared as a teacher, because I wanted to make sure that I was putting forth my best lesson. That was kind of nice, to be held accountable on that. Then just making sure that, just your patience level, because you really want to model. […] I think it helped me. (Jennifer)
	I think it helped me to be even more aware of how organized I need to be. That was good for me. I made some huge organizational improvements. I learned some things from my student-teacher that helped me as well. I think that was huge, and I think just the other part that we talked about, just making sure that we are utilizing everyone as best we can. (Mark)

Control and power in the classroom. When classrooms are structured hierarchically, there is often a power struggle between the mentor teacher and the novice teacher. Co-teaching is supposed to alleviate much of that inequality, but there remains a power imbalance because the mentor teacher is ultimately responsible for educating the students in his or her classroom. Some mentor teachers had difficulty letting go of control within their classroom so the teacher candidate could develop his or her teaching skills, which often means failing and learning how to recover from failure. Those teachers who had difficulty relinquishing control tended to think in terms of transmission and wanted candidates to absorb the information they presented and replicate the mentor teacher's practice, rather than transformation of the teacher candidate, which might require mentor teachers to accept new ways of thinking. When teachers were asked to explain a typical day in the classroom with their teacher candidates, Jennifer and Rosie described environments where they had difficulty relinquishing control of the classroom. Lori and Violet described how difficult it was not to jump up and take control when teacher candidates were having difficulty or making mistakes. Haley, Rosie, and Rosalind all said that although they would relinquish some control to allow their teacher candidates to learn, if student learning were in jeopardy, they would step in and take control. Table 12 shows the different levels of control mentor teachers described.

Giving up control of a classroom is a difficult aspect of student teaching for many mentor teachers and one of the reasons co-teaching has gained in popularity. However, even with co-teaching, teacher candidates must have solo time and learn how to handle

the everyday problems of running a classroom. Finding the balance between teacher candidate learning and student learning remains an issue for participants in this study.

Table 13

Control and Power in the Classroom

Description of level of control in the classroom	Quotation
Mentor teacher in control	I realized that was actually kind of the hardest thing, was giving up complete control. […] It was really hard for me to watch her try to teach it, because I felt like she didn't have the background that I had, and so that's where we did a lot of the co-teaching. I would do either the planning and she would teach it, and then we would kind of be up there together doing it side by side. Or she just observed a lot of that, too, towards the end of the, I just kind of kept teaching that. But otherwise, she just did basically whatever I did. (Jennifer)
	I like the relationship that I am building with these children, you know what I mean? It's hard for me to give up the relationship-building, to be honest. If I have one [teacher candidate] every other year, then each group will get the experience […] because I have them for two years. (Rosie)
Recognizing that giving up control is important but difficult	Yeah, you have to be willing to give up the control. I don't feel like I'm a control freak, but […] It's a growing process for me and I'm learning, and I am pretty patient, but again, just knowing when to stop and knowing when not to 'cause they have to [...] This is their time and it's my time to help them figure it out. (Lori)
	I had to practice letting go. I had that in mind before anyone came was that this is a great opportunity for me to let go. I'm on the downhill side of my career, so it's like I have nothing that I need to prove to anyone. I can manage this job, now I need to be able to let go so that I can help someone else. To help someone else, I put in my mind that I'm working with an adult and that's not my job to convey everything I know but to be able to listen and to learn from that other adult. […] And yes, we had some bumps and some things didn't go perfectly, but that letting on my part allowed her to learn from her mistake. I was there to talk about it. (Violet)
Releasing control but ready to step in if necessary	I guess that's what I'm always thinking, too, I've got to let my student teacher go, but at the end of the day I'm still the one accountable to these students. She needs to do what she needs to do, but I need to be ready to intervene if things are falling apart. There's a certain amount of struggle that student teachers need to experience, but not at the expense of kids; there needs to be a line. (Haley)

(table continues)

Description of level of control in the classroom	Quotations
	So, I try to allow her some of that on her own, because if I say something then they're probably going to do what I've asked them to do. But it isn't her getting control of their behavior or their motivation. So, yes, I would be involved. I'd be involved with more, like, "Let me help you with the problem." But I try to not step in as much on the discipline part, because this is their learning opportunity. Gotta' be tough. Be tough. And sometimes you're sitting there going, "I would like to step in." (Rosie)
	Sometimes you just need to be really blunt in a nice way. I mean, I'm blunt with my little kids, too, but it's like, a different level with adults. And sometimes […] I tell them, I always tell them, I say, "Let's look in the mirror" […] and I say, "I hear myself […] every day. I don't wanna' see me, I don't wanna' hear me, I wanna' see you, I wanna' hear you, and that's gonna' look different." […] Don't get me wrong. I guide, and if there's something that needs to be addressed or if I think something's going askew, we're going to straighten it up, but I just think that it works better. […] But just letting them be able to grow into their own skin, so to speak. I think that was important to me to see, because everybody's different. […] They need to be able to be them. (Rosalind)

Transmission and transformation. As a mentor teacher helps a teacher candidate learn to teach, he or she takes one of two stances regarding teacher-candidate development: transmission or transformation. From the transmission stance, the mentor teacher provides resources or direction and the teacher candidate is supposed to learn from the materials and skills that have been passed down in order to mimic the mentor teacher. From the transformation stance, teacher candidates are encouraged to become the best version of themselves rather than a duplicate of the mentor teacher. Transmission is often easier for mentor teachers because it is quick and gets to the point, but it does not allow the teacher candidate to develop his or her own identity or learn how to recover from failures in the classroom. Although more of the mentor teachers in this study

actively encouraged their teacher candidates to develop their own teaching styles, teachers did occasionally resort to transmission.

While all mentor teachers except Jennifer encouraged reflection and growth, most appear to have given the teacher candidates lessons and resources and explained exactly how they would teach the class, instead of starting with the student learning objectives and asking the teacher candidate how they would get there. The mentor teachers believed sharing resources was a form of modeling, which Jennifer, Rosie, Haley, and Allison described as beneficial. However, handing the teacher candidate all the resources the mentor teacher has developed over time promotes mimicking the mentor teacher rather than encouraging the teacher candidate to learn how to curate his or her own resources and develop lessons. Haley and Rosie used transmission of resources but also encouraged the teacher candidates to seek additional information. Violet, Rosalind, and Lori made the conscious effort to tell their teacher candidates they were expected to develop their own unique teaching styles.

While several mentor teachers acknowledged the importance of letting a teacher candidate develop his or her own lessons and unique teaching style, by giving the teacher candidate all the work they had done to curate resources and develop lesson plans as a means of modeling or saving time, the mentor teachers actually encouraged the teacher candidates to mimic them.

Table 14

Transmission and Transformation

Description of transmission and transformation behaviors	Quotation
Transmission of resources and plans	And so, I feel like that observation piece is really important in the beginning, and then, at least when I'm teaching, having direct instruction. And then when it's work time or play time or practice time, then I really want them to do what I'm doing and to get around to kids and build those relationships, help with the work. And then when they see a behavior from So-and-So that maybe they saw on the carpet, they can see how maybe I handled it and maybe try that strategy. […] And so, they see how to get those routines established and how to get some of those behaviors under control. (Allison) I wrote out really specific lesson plans because I thought that would help her understand what I was doing and why I was doing it. Typically, I don't write out these lesson plans, so it took a long time, but it was worth it. For the first two weeks she just observed me. She just kind of sat to the side and took a lot of notes of whatever I was doing. In the morning, I would try to explain why I did the things that I did, or, "This is why I do it this way," just so she had an idea of what was going on. (Jennifer)
Transmission but also encouraging the teacher candidate to find other resources	She identified a few things that she really wanted to teach, and she identified a few things that she probably would prefer to not teach, but she would do whatever I told her to do. We kind of split the difference on those things. I said, "Well, this is a topic I want you to gain some experience on, but this is how I think you can approach it." I would share resources and share a plan and then say, "But you need to make it your own." Think about this for a few days, and work on this for a few days, and then come back and we'll talk about it. That's kind of how that went. (Haley) She would send me lesson plans […] but we would cover the basics so that before I got the lesson plans, that I had an idea. And then I could give her suggestions or we could say, "Okay, these are my resources that I have; you can pick choose." I mean, I tried to give her the freedom of picking and choosing the resources that she would be able to use, and then she would research some of her own. (Rosie)
Encouraging teacher candidates to be different	To think ahead to the next day in advance and have plenty activities planned. "What do they do when they finish?" kind of thing. That was a big deal when I was working with her, because in my mind, I always had the daily five. She just wasn't as comfortable with that. "Well, let's figure out what it is that you want them to do when they're finished." (Violet)

(table continues)

Description of transmission and transformation behaviors	Quotations
	And sometimes, […] I tell them, I always tell them, I say, "Let's look in the mirror," […] and I say, "I hear myself […] every day. I don't wanna' see me, I don't wanna' hear me, I wanna' see you, I wanna' hear you, and that's gonna' look different." […] But just letting them be able to grow into their own skin, so to speak. I think that was important to me to see, because everybody's different. […] They need to be able to be them. (Rosalind)
	She needed to figure out again what worked for her and what she wanted to try and if it wasn't what I was thinking or [...] They need to find their way through that and sometimes, it's just really hard to sit back and [...] Not that they were doing anything wrong, but just like, "Oh, I probably would've chosen this book or... " And offer suggestions, like if we were planning, "Here are some of my favorite books and the way I plan is I center things around stories." (Lori)

Co-teaching in student teaching. Since all the participants claimed to use a co-teaching model for some or all of the time during student teaching, the subject came up of participants being questioned about their daily practices. Although most spoke of co-teaching in beneficial terms, the benefits varied depending on the teacher's outlook. Some teachers said co-teaching was beneficial for the mentor teacher because it was difficult to give up control of the class or because the teacher candidate was helpful, so both people could learn and student needs could be more easily met. Rosie believed co-teaching was beneficial for the teacher candidate, who would get more experience. Rosalind, Mark, and Charlotte spoke about the benefits for the students when there were two capable adults teaching. Haley believed co-teaching forced much-needed dialogue between the mentor and teacher candidate that might not normally happen. However, Allison, Mark, and Jennifer questioned whether co-teaching was realistic once teacher

candidates were hired into their first full-time teaching job and thought solo time would be more beneficial.

Table 15

Co-teaching in Student Teaching

Pros and cons of co-teaching	Quotation
Benefits for mentor teacher	I preferred the co-teaching because it is kind of hard to give up complete control and especially, when teaching, you're like, "Oh! That's not how I would teach that." Then I had to be like, "Well, is it wrong, or is it just a different way of approaching it?" I don't know. It's kind of hard to find that balance, I think. (Jennifer) Some of the modeling on both ends because it's not just me with the experience. It's someone else with brand new ideas who's never done it before and maybe I haven't looked at [...] I'm looking at it through a completely different lens. I've taught this lesson ten times, but this person's got a completely new spin on it. That is totally beneficial. […] You can get so much more done. And not having defined roles. It's like, "I'm the lead teacher and you're not." We don't operate that way. I might be teaching math and you're going to support me and then you're going to be teaching whatever and I'm going to support you, and then we're both going to be teaching whatever. (Lori)
Experiential learning for teacher candidate	I would say that with co-teaching and teaching together that the student teacher gets to see it more hands-on. They get to see more of it. You know, rather than me giving advice or reflecting at the end of it, they get to see it in action. (Rosie)
Benefits for students	Benefits for the students, definitely. I think anytime you have two adults, kids get more attention. There's more small-group. Differentiation happens better. With co-teaching, I just think you have that other, maybe, set of eyes, where you're observing and maybe catching and noticing things in students that you might not, where if I'm just observing the teacher candidate teaching and I give all that attention to the student teacher versus paying attention, well multi-tasking, I guess, like, "Okay, we're focusing on the students together," and we can have conversations. (Charlotte)

(table continues)

Pros and cons of co-teaching	Quotations
	I think the pros are it's just way more fun. I mean it was just such a fun winter. I really enjoyed every minute of it. It was just fun to have someone in here working with you, not like they're always sitting and watching you like you're being observed, too, kind of. It was just fun to have another colleague to work with. […] And also, I think just another pro would be just the kids just loved it. They loved having two people in here. […] And [teacher candidate] being a girl, the girls navigated to her. And some of the boys did, too. But I mean she had a different relationship with them that I couldn't give them and I think that was positive, too. (Mark)
	I think that a pro would be that little kids, my first-graders could learn so much more, so much faster. [...] First of all, let's say you have the support. […] I think you can reach a smaller number faster. (Rosalind)
Increased communication	I think one of the pluses of the co-teaching model is it forces there to be dialogue where maybe there wasn't dialogue before. I always had that dialogue, though, with my student teachers. And I never, I guess, fully gave things over without wanting to know like, "What are you thinking? Where are you planning on taking this? What's that going to look like? Let's talk through this. How do you think So-and-So is going to react to that? Well, you know, So-and-So in the back of the classroom is probably going to do this if you do that. How are you going to respond?" (Haley)
Co-teaching not reality	I tend to struggle a little bit with the co-teaching model just because, well, the difference is one, you're doing things together, versus I model, you try, […] at least, that's the way that we've done it, and I think the co-teaching can be good initially, but then I think they really need to experience doing it on their own without a second pair of hands because that's just not the real world. So, I think it has its benefits in the beginning, but then I really think I prefer that traditional model just so that they can experience it on their own a little bit more (Allison)
	If I could think of a con [of co-teaching] would be that the reality is that you will have to, if you get a job somewhere where you have to take the kids by yourself, you're going to be in there by yourself, and it might be good to have some time maybe that they're working just on their own with the whole group without someone in there. (Mark)
	But I felt like the turn-it-completely-over model was more realistic for what her situation will probably be, 'cause she probably won't be co-teaching. There's a chance, I guess, that she could end up in a co-teacher room, but you're responsible for planning your whole lesson by yourself, and if you don't know how to teach it, you need to figure it out. (Jennifer)

Co-teaching played a prominent role in student teaching for these teaching teams, although there was a lack of consensus about who actually benefitted from the model. This lack of buy-in from these three mentor teachers was problematic and led the mentor teachers to adopt more traditional takeover practices, including collaborative relationships that were not fostered outside the classroom and little collaborative planning. For those teachers who questioned the reality of the co-teaching model and thought teachers should have some time on their own to teach, the co-teaching model the EPP uses promotes the idea that co-teaching should be used where appropriate, but each candidate also needs solo time to teach (Heck, Bacharach, & Dahlberg, 2008). This practice calls into question how the mentor teachers had been trained in co-teaching and whether they understood the model's goals.

Planning and shared practice. One key to effective co-teaching is co-planning. Finding time for co-planning can be challenging with teachers' other professional responsibilities, including maintaining parent contact, grading, preparing materials, dealing with student issues and discipline, and participating in professional development. When asked about a typical day with their teacher candidates, the mentor teachers frequently mentioned the lack of time for planning, particularly when these planning times were also used for guided reflection or feedback on the day's lessons. In many cases, planning time needed to be scheduled with priorities set for a particular length of time. Planning time for reflection or feedback speaks to how mentor teachers implemented coaching or mentoring. While some teachers were able to arrive early, stay late, or use email or text messages to extend planning time, in Mark's case, coaching

responsibilities cut short his amount of time for co-planning and reflection. Table 15 shows how some of the mentor teachers prioritized planning time for maximum effectiveness and communicated outside school.

One takeaway from discussing planning time with the mentor teachers is that there was never enough planning time during the school day. With many of the teachers having families and other responsibilities after school, the additional responsibility of working with a teacher candidate and taking the time to guide reflection while also planning future lessons can be time-consuming and add considerable stress to the mentor teacher's life.

Table 16

Planning and Shared Practice

Description of how and when planning takes place	Quotation
Prioritizing planning time and time outside of school	I think I have found that planning time can't be assumed, that to set a schedule with the teacher candidate, […] I think being really intentional about how we're gonna' use our time is one thing that I've learned is super important, not to assume that they're just going to be here and available for that, and to set that up at the very beginning. […] I encourage them to have a notebook and just jot things down all day long as they think of it. The highs, the lows, questions, whatever they might feel we need to talk about or discuss before the next day. I feel sometimes we need to remove ourselves before we can really hammer. You know, it's just fresher if you can get out, get the fresh air, exercise, or whatever it might be that you might need to do. I'm open to phone calls, texting, email; I do really make sure I'm available to respond in the evenings, as well. (Charlotte) There was not a lot of time to get anything done there. Then after school we would usually stay until about 4:00 and make sure that we were ready for the next day, so we were on the same page. […] Not every night, but she would text me pretty frequently. (Jennifer)

(table continues)

Description of how and when planning takes place	Quotation
	Then we sort of debriefed on what she did that morning just before the preparation time so that it would be immediate and it would be positive. That seemed to work really well. Then we'd move ahead with the preparing for the rest of the morning and the things that we would need to prepare. She was also helping me. […] We both lived in the same community. We carpooled. Well, we take turns. She would drive one week, I drive the next week. We always had mini meetings on the way to work. (Violet)
	I'm usually here by 7:15 […] Usually she beat me by a few minutes, which was just fine. She would put her stuff away, and then I would walk in and I'd put my stuff away, and then we would finalize our plan for the day. [...] On a typical day after that first week, there's a really good chance that we had already emailed or texted back and forth the night before, cleaning up plans depending on who was doing what. […] After school, I typically stay for at least an hour, if not like an hour and 20 minutes, and typically she stayed with me and that's where a lot of stuff also got done: planning for the next day, arranging desks if that needed to happen, getting copies made, grades and creating assessments, tweaking assessments. A good hour or plus planning for the next day and the days after. […] It wouldn't be unusual if there was a text message or two waiting for me around 9:00 when I would grab my phone, and then we would text back and forth. I would not initiate a text message after 10:00, but if she sent a text message after 10:00, then I would respond. (Haley)
	We've found in years past, our prep time really actually gets taken up and utilized with student behaviors and things like that. So really before and after school is when we do most of our, the bulk of our talking and planning. […] Then, thinking ahead to the next day, "What are you gonna' be working on tonight?" Yep, the text messaging and Facebook messaging. Whatever they're kind of on. Yeah, we would stay. We definitely didn't leave until after 4:00 most days. (Allison)
Restrictions on planning time	I'm a coach, and so, I actually typically left school right away to go to practice or to a game. In the morning, I also had weight-room responsibilities, so I let [teacher candidate] know that I was not going to be here at 7:15 in the morning or stay 'til five because I couldn't. [...] I don't think we did much [email or texting after school]. We texted back and forth about snow days and stuff, but not about school. (Mark)

Theme 4: Reflection on the Role of a Mentor Teacher

The participants in this study were interviewed shortly after their teacher candidates had completed student teaching and over the course of three weeks, they

discussed their expectations before their teacher candidates arrived, their own everyday practices, and how working with a teacher candidate impacted their professional growth and perspective. In the third round of interviews, teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences and think about the role they played as mentor teachers, as well as its relation to education outside their classroom. With only a few weeks left in the school year when these interviews took place, the teachers were well-positioned to reflect on the current school year.

The subthemes that emerged in this section emphasize the larger impact of serving as a mentor teacher. The first subtheme focuses on how serving as a mentor teacher affected that teacher's community of practice. The second subtheme was mentor teachers' reflection on the advice they would give someone thinking about hosting a teacher candidate in the future; they also retrospectively described the ideal mentor teacher. The third subtheme was a reflection on how the mentor teacher's role had changed since these participants had completed their EPPs. The subtheme of andragogy versus pedagogy was a result of asking the mentor teachers about the differences between teaching their teacher candidate and the students in the classroom. Since most teachers were the only people in their communities of practice hosting a teacher candidate, the question of where teachers got advice for working with their teacher candidates resulted in the subtheme of external coaching/mentoring/supervision. The final subtheme emerged as a result of asking the mentor teachers if there was anything else they wanted to discuss about the experience of working with a teacher candidate; here, they mentioned areas of difficulty where they would have liked supports. The data in this theme align with RQ3,

which asks how mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession.

Becoming part of a larger community of practice. Some participants belonged to small communities of practice that might have contained only one other person with whom the mentor teacher discussed curriculum, data, professional development, and established standards of competence for the grade or subject they taught. Participants were asked if they thought serving as a mentor teacher had produced a ripple effect on their community of practice. Haley discussed the personal benefits of refining practice and the importance of relationship-building for a new potential community member. Charlotte and Mark gained new perspectives on items like curriculum or learning design, which they were able to bring back to their colleagues. Lori explained how taking the lead and being the first to work with a teacher candidate assuaged her colleagues' fears so that they might think about volunteering to host a teacher candidate, while Violet sent her teacher candidate to interact with colleagues outside her classroom to demonstrate the benefits of working with a teacher candidate. Two teachers noted that the effects on their communities of practice were negligible, and it appeared that they kept the growth and development resulting from hosting a teacher candidate separate from the lesson-planning, curriculum, and data discussions that usually happened. The teachers did not bring what they learned in working with their teacher candidates to their colleagues in their communities of practice. However, serving as mentor teachers did have a larger impact in a different way. Rosalind shared what happened in her classroom with the EPP as an advisory board member so the program could make improvements. Allison did not

use the knowledge and strategies she had learned with her community of practice, but she said her community of practice helped troubleshoot problems and provided support when her teacher candidate struggled and Allison was unsure of how to help. This support system for the mentor teacher demonstrates how an understanding of the importance of individual growth and development is fostered by members of a community of practice. Table 16 shows mentor teachers' perspectives on becoming part of a larger community of practice. It is interesting to note that even when the teachers did not believe their work made a direct impact on their communities of practice, they were able to describe ways in which it might have made an indirect difference.

Table 17

Becoming Part of a Larger Community of Practice

Description of the impact of being a mentor teacher on community of practice	Quotation
Professional improvement	I think anytime you have teachers interacting and growing, you're going to have that bigger impact. In terms of me, I think I'm a better teacher after I do things like this, [...] whether my student teacher is one of the best I've ever worked with, or not so much. You learn things about yourself and it forces you to reflect on why you do certain things and maybe why you don't do other things. And I think that there's always a value in that. And then in terms of the people that you work with when you're a mentor teacher, yeah, there's definitely a ripple effect. Those people are going into the classroom. […] Sometimes they end up in classrooms in your building and in your district or in your general geographic area. [...] That relationship typically doesn't end on their last day of student teaching. And there is always that connection, that bond. (Haley)
New perspectives	I realize that maybe there's some areas in our curriculum that maybe aren't as strong. […] But I found myself […] finding some gaps in curriculum as I've really sat down and planned with her. [… It was] something that I didn't expect at all, just kind of evaluating the curriculum in general, and then being able to go to our second-grade district-wide team and sharing some of the things that I found. (Charlotte) Yeah, I think as we move toward more of an individualized learning-type school, I think what really was a major impact for me was just how two adults can help the kids grow more. […] And if we have a special-ed teacher also with my teammate that we all three of us could be utilizing ourselves better. […] Certainly, we have collaborated before on what we teach and different units and stuff, but I definitely think that we need to be doing more things together and combining our groups, for sure. (Mark)
Convince others that teacher candidates are competent	When I think of our team [...] One of them can't have a student teacher because you have to be tenured. The other two, I think, I've probably opened the door a little bit. I was the first one to try it. And again, it's being willing to give up that control and letting someone else come in and sharing. But I think once I started doing it, I think it was kind of like, "Oh, okay." (Lori)

(table continues)

Description of the impact of being a mentor teacher on community of practice	Quotation
	The student teacher […] she had a very warm personality. So, she was able to make an impact on other people in the building. We have a [...] what's called "target time," where we target, set aside 30 minutes for just intensive reading instruction. And we group our students by ability for that 30 minutes. She had her own target-time reading group, and within that, she met students from other classrooms. After that, then they would look for her and greet her in the hallway. As a part of that, she also had to do some planning on her own and ask questions of other adults in the building to use spaces and resources outside of the classroom. And they came back and indicated to me what a competent person she was and how kind she was. So, there was that kind of impact. (Violet)
No larger contributions to community of practice but…	I think that when I have a student teacher, and other colleagues have student teachers also, we do share a lot about that experience, and so I think, in that way, we kind of help support each other in supporting our student teachers. But I'm not sure that I can say that there's anything that I can specifically identify that has really helped me in growing my community here at school. (Allison)
	I probably bring more to the [teaching program] than I do back to my colleagues. Sometimes we talk about what [student teachers] lack, but in my building, there's not a lot of people that have student teachers. (Rosalind)

Advice to colleagues. As a question to help guide reflection, mentor teachers were asked if they had any advice for colleagues who might be thinking about working with teacher candidates in a co-teaching model. The question was designed to encourage teachers to think about what they now understood to be good practice when mentoring a teacher candidate. Many participants spoke about flexibility and letting go of control. It was interesting that this topic came up so often and that mentor teachers recognized maintaining too much control is a barrier for teacher candidate learning and development.

For some teachers like Rosie, who struggled with control issues, it was easier to speak about than put into practice.

Another topic that came up was being thorough with instructions. Jennifer had difficulty letting go of control, and although she thought she was doing so by giving her teacher candidate creative freedom with some subjects, with reading she often wrote the lesson plan and did the teaching while the teacher candidate observed. Rather than encouraging the teacher candidate to learn by doing, Jennifer believed if she wrote sufficiently detailed plans, the teacher candidate would be able to replicate her teaching. Allison, Charlotte, and Haley spoke about the need to have realistic expectations for their teacher candidates because they probably did not know about a range of things, including age-appropriateness. Haley also made the important observation that the teacher candidate is probably not going to be like the mentor teacher.

Finally, even though teacher candidates might not have the knowledge that experience brings, Mark and Lori stressed the importance of getting the teacher candidates as involved as soon as possible so they develop a realistic view of the teaching profession. Table 17 shows some advice the mentor teachers would give to colleagues who might be thinking about working with a teacher candidate.

Table 18

Advice to Colleagues

Areas of advice for future mentor teachers	Quotation
Flexibility and control	Because of the high standards that the university's having, they [teacher candidates] are prepared. And if they make some mistakes, to kind of say, "Well, what's the worst thing that could happen if they make a mistake?" Yeah, to think of the worst-case scenario and then realize that that's probably not going to happen. […] And the letting go; I don't know if it works just to tell someone that. I think that's kind of an internal thing that they have to be ready for. Yeah, maybe just a little talk about, "Trust that they're an adult." (Violet) They should also be willing to listen, and open to different ideas than theirs. I mean, […] I think that they shouldn't be quick to judgment. […] Every person has their own strengths and their own personality. […] I think that they should be flexible and willing to teach. I think that probably one of the most crucial parts is to make sure that you have time. (Rosie) Advice [...] Be flexible, be understanding, […] and be ready to learn from them. (Rosalind) You have to be willing to give up the control. I don't feel like I'm a control freak, but […] it's a growing process for me and I'm learning, and I am pretty patient, but again, just knowing when to stop and knowing when not to. [...] This is their time and it's my time to help them figure it out. (Lori)
Be thorough in instructions	I would say that they just need [...] you need to explain why you're doing everything. […] It's a lot of time with somebody but it's good time. It makes you [...] I think, a better teacher. […] I mean, just have to trust that it's going to be okay. (Jennifer)
Have Realistic Expectations	I think it can be a really great experience and that you can […] really love it. […] I think go slow […] typically, to not release a lot of responsibility right away. […] Try to communicate as much and as often as you can […] to constantly check for understanding. I think a lot of times, when they first start out, they really want to please, and so they're afraid to say, "I don't understand what you're saying, I don't know what you want," and so, just to kind of get that out of the way right away, that they feel comfortable. […] Don't assume that they know what you want and don't assume that they've had even prior experience coming in with kids and things like that. (Allison)

(table continues)

Areas of advice for future mentor teachers	Quotations
	I think the advice I would give would be to not assume anything. Just assume that they know very little about how the elementary school learns, 'cause we don't know what their experiences were and what buildings they were in. […] I think just taking that time from the very beginning to build a relationship and get to know them on a personal level […] and then just making sure you're really organized and plan for a lot of time together, making sure that you have time carved out for planning, for reflecting, looking at data to make sure that they really are prepared to do a good job. I think just probably our district curriculum, just really making sure they understand what we use. (Charlotte)
	I'd say in addition to laying out those hard and fast things that need to happen and just the logistics of things, also recognize that your student teacher's probably not going to be just like you. (Haley)
Have teacher candidates get involved	I think I would say just jump in right away and try to utilize the skill set of that person as a teacher. Don't do a lot of observing. Just have them teach small groups. […] Just try to empower them to feel like they're an equal. […] I think that you have to be willing to take feedback, which is, I think, hard for teachers sometimes. […] And I think just to be open to constructive criticism. Or not maybe constructive criticism, but just be open to change. You have to, if you're going to empower them and then they give you an idea, you have to be willing to take it and actually do something with it. I think my main message would be that if you get a chance to do the co-teaching model, to take advantage of it because it's fun. (Mark)
	Involve them as much as you can in your day-to-day life as far as school because you don't know what you don't know. They probably don't realize all the little things that go into putting your day together: the planning and the prep and the copying and the emails. (Lori)

Role of the mentor teacher today. Teachers were asked how the role of mentor teacher has changed since they completed their student-teaching programs. The idea of planning, teaching, and assessing as a team because of co-teaching was a popular response among most participants. They cited collaboration as occurring much more frequently than in the traditional model of student teaching, and the mentor teachers knew the teaching environment today is more supportive and less isolated than when they had

completed their programs. This view represents a shift in perspective for the mentor teachers, some of whom had good student teaching experiences using the traditional model. However, not all teachers believed the mentor-teacher role had changed much. Allison, who did not find co-teaching to be beneficial, did not believe the mentor-teacher's role had changed much since her own student teaching. While she had a good student-teaching experience, her mentor teacher was not always available and did not give frequent feedback. Table 18 shows participants' beliefs about how the mentor-teacher role has or has not changed.

A main idea from the data presented in this section is that mentor teachers find change to be difficult. Unless mentor teachers see the benefits of changing to a new model, there can be resistance to change for several reasons, including not fully understanding the new model, questioning the new model's value if they believe the old model worked fine, and fear of change. Even for teachers who may not have had the most supportive student-teaching experiences using the traditional model, some were willing to perpetuate the traditional model because they had never seen another model in action or they were resistant to change.

Table 19

Role of the Mentor Teacher Today

Description of how the role of mentor teacher has changed	Quotation
Teaching as a team	I've had student teachers in the past where I was under the impression that I was the lead teacher and I was more of a leader than a coach, but more of a person that was going to give the information, and I was the expert. Whereas this case, I think it's shifted to more, we're both experts, and we just have different experiences to get to that expertise. (Violet) Since I became a teacher, it's become more of a co-teaching model versus sitting back there watching them teach and having them do it on their own. It's become more of, "Let's do this together, let's do some of the planning." Some of this you have to weigh in on your own, but some of it is nice to do together and to do more. (Rosie) When I was a student teacher, I feel like it was very much kind of on my own: "See what you create. Here's your responsibility. Do it." I feel like there's more support now for a student teacher. We do a lot more together, more of like a gradual release, within a week even, where we might start a unit together, or Monday and Tuesday, but then okay, by Friday, they kind of have a little bit more responsibility on their own. I think just the support, and that co-teaching and planning and assessing, and just doing everything together supports them and helps them ask questions and learn from all the experiences that we do. (Charlotte) I think [the role] changed a lot. I think it is much more of a team effort than someone feeling like they are responsible to make this person a teacher. And that's how I did it the first time I had a student teacher, and that's how it was done to me, and I think it's just a much more collaborative approach [now], which is good. (Mark)
Role has not changed much	I don't know that it's changed a whole lot, I don't. You know, I think they want us to do a little bit more with the co-teaching. […] When the university supervisors come in to do the observations, they have to check off, like, one is an assist, one is the co-teaching, one is solo. So that didn't happen when I was going through. It was all just really more traditional, […] but that's about it. […] I look back to what my student teacher did, my preparation teacher did for me, and I feel like I'm doing very much those same things, so I don't know that my role has changed a whole lot from what I saw when I was just starting. (Allison)

Andragogy versus pedagogy. To understand if the mentor teachers understood the differences between adult learning, known as andragogy, and student learning, known as pedagogy, they were questioned about the strategies and practices they used to teach students as opposed to teaching a teaching a teacher candidate. Most veteran mentor teachers recognized at least one of the principles of adult learning and reported that their relationships with the teacher candidates were quite different than the relationships they had with their students. However, Jennifer, Mark, and Allison noted that while there were some differences in teaching students and teaching teacher candidates, they were unable to recognize any principles of adult learning as a reason for this difference. While they may have used age-appropriate language with the adult student teachers, they did not approach adult learning any differently than they approached student learning. Table 20 shows what mentor teachers thought about the difference between teaching children and teaching teacher candidates.

Table 20

Andragogy versus Pedagogy

Strategies used with teaching the teacher candidate	Quotation
Strategies based in andragogy	Well, I think the biggest difference between teaching adults and kids would be I don't have to be the one so much to hold them accountable. So, with students, the young children, I have to follow up to see, "Did you do what I asked you to do? Did you follow the directions on the paper?" Then I'm collecting a lot of that informal assessment. Whereas the adult, when I was coaching her, most often, she was here for a reason. She has her own internal accountability checklist. (Violet) I would say that with adults, I think that more choice, more options, more ways, more perspective. […] That's one thing here is that we are flexible. What you're going to teach or what content needs to be mastered is not necessarily flexible, but how you get there can be flexible. (Rosie) I think with adults, I have found you kind of have to figure out what their personality type is from the very beginning. […] Personality and really allowing them to have a say in things is so important. I don't think an adult learner can learn and grow by being told what to do and how to do it. Students, either. There's so many similarities, but with adults, they're not as moldable as a kid. (Charlotte) Well, I don't usually give them [teacher candidates] stickers. […] I take into account that they are adults, but it's a little harder because now when I started on these student teachers, there was just a couple years difference. Now it's like they're younger than my kids. (Rosalind) But with student teachers, because you make those recommendations for jobs and because you write those letters, and you potentially can make or break their ability to get into the career, there's a different relationship. There's more, in some ways, riding on that relationship for your student teachers. They want to impress. They want to do well. (Haley)
Strategies based in pedagogy	I think that [teaching an adult versus a child is] similar that you break things kind of the same way and explain the steps. But with the student teacher, you speak to her more like a peer than a student. She's not a student in my class. […] I guess to just ask her, "When I say this, you know what I'm talking [about], and when I say this you know what that is, you know what that means," and I'll explain to her if she needs it, but she understands it. (Jennifer) In a lot of ways, I feel like it [teaching teacher candidate] is the same. […] I feel like we do a lot of modeling. […] I feel like you use a lot of the same techniques, you know? I feel like I give them, I give student teachers more input and more feedback. (Allison) I don't want to say tiptoeing, but it's a little bit harder to, I think, give honest feedback to an adult. […] But I guess I would try to approach it the same. We all have to have a growth mindset. We can't be fixed on the negative. […] So, I think it's a little different but a little the same. I think you know that they're going to, the student teacher's going to take the negative harder than the students are, I think. (Mark)

External coaching, mentoring, and supervision. Several of the mentor teachers pointed to the university supervisor as being influential in providing them with resources and answers, in a way forming a new community of practice in which they were peripheral members learning to coach and mentor. However, the university supervisors were not the only people to whom the mentor teachers turned when they needed assistance. When thinking about how mentor teachers apply their learning and growth, it is worth investigating where teachers turn for their own learning.

Violet noted how the supervisor helped her fill some of her own gaps in knowledge about mentoring, and she used the relationship as a resource. Haley was proactive and established a connection with the university supervisor to make sure communication was clear throughout student teaching. Jennifer also mentioned that if she needed to deliver negative feedback to a student teacher, she would work with the university supervisor to establish an effective way to approach the conversation. However, some people felt safer looking for guidance at the building level, either from colleagues or administrators. Allison reported that she turned to her colleagues to problem-solve internally before reaching out to the university supervisor. When Mark found it difficult to have a conversation with his teacher candidate about being too friendly with the second-grade students, his principal chimed in before he could say anything. Although the principal might have meant well, unfortunately she did not help Mark develop his leadership skills by having the conversation for him. Table 21 details to whom the mentor teachers turned when they needed support in working with their teacher candidates.

Table 21

External Coaching, Mentoring, and Supervision

Assistance in coaching and mentoring	Quotation
University supervisor	[MSU] has a university supervisor, […] where that person became my resource person. […] He would keep me informed of the sequence. He would keep me informed of what my responsibilities were this quarter, as well as giving that same information to the teacher candidate. So, that was very helpful to kind of coach as I go. […] He really was good at providing that information as we went. So, he was educating me through emails. We would try and find a time to talk before he left, and he was always available. I'd ask him questions through email. (Violet) It is helpful to put out there right away that you are going to have a communication with their supervisor, which is in no way a reflection of your displeasure or liking of their teaching style. It's just there needs to be communication and there will be a separate line of communication between you and that university supervisor so that if something does pop up you can use that person as a resource. So, I do try to send off an email or have a phone conversation with the university supervisor early on, even before the placement, and just say, "This is my email and if there are issues that you see on your end or I see issues on my end, what is the best way for us to communicate?" (Haley) It would've been nice [to have some help in coaching to have difficult conversations]. I would have had to think prior to that meeting if I knew that something was going to be uncomfortable, how am I going to approach this? And I probably would have gone to her supervisor first […] so we can positively shape it [feedback]. (Jennifer)
University and building level	I feel like I put a lot of time into that, trying to help them in ways that maybe I haven't tried, or maybe reaching out to the university to say, "We're struggling right now in these areas." I ask colleagues, too, for input so, "She's really having a hard time with this right now. Any ideas? Any suggestions of things I can try?" (Allison)
Building level	[My principal] actually beat me to the punch. I wanted to say this, but she said it. […] She said, "Where are you going to draw the line with being the kids' friend and being their teacher?" […] And actually, I think [my principal] observed and then we had a conversation and [my principal] brought it up. And I wanted to, but it was just hard to bring it up. (Mark)

While it is important to note that not all university supervisors provide the same levels of support, Violet, Haley, Jennifer, and Allison reported they turned to these supervisors when they had questions.

Areas of difficulty. A final subtheme in mentor teachers' reflections on their role investigates areas in which they reported needing growth. Teachers were asked to talk about areas in which they wished they had received more training to find out where they experienced difficulties when working with their teacher candidates. While there was no consensus, it was evident that mentor teachers had the most difficulty working with candidates who struggled. In this area, how to evaluate, deliver feedback, and engage in difficult conversations were priorities for Allison, Mark, and Jennifer. Rosalind and Lori wanted help in areas that dealt with broader professional issues, such as social and emotional learning or technology that would help them regardless of whether they had teacher candidates in the room. Charlotte mentioned the difficulties of helping teacher candidates collaborate with other educators or adults who might be in the classroom in a support role. Table 22 shows specific areas of difficulty mentor teachers identified as needing additional information or training.

Table 22

Areas of Difficulty

Areas where the mentor teachers wanted additional information	Quotation
Struggling teacher candidate	The part you get stuck on is when you have somebody that's really struggling. I think it's a real fine line. What kind of interventions do you try with them? What kind of support do you give them? […] I always kind of reflect, "Is this me? Am I not being clear enough? Is it us in some way that we're not communicating well?" […] When they're struggling, what do you do after you've exhausted all your tricks? And trying to keep them feeling good and confident. "Yep, you're struggling right now, but it's okay. We'll get through it." […] Sometimes an area where I feel like I need more help in, it's not always there. (Allison)
Evaluating a teacher candidate	Yeah, that also was hard, because she took it very seriously, her evaluation, and I think maybe a rubric or two would be good, just as something to have. […] I could just jot down some things and then I could say, "Well, this is what I saw this day," instead of me trying to think back. But […] when I would know there was an area that was kind of maybe not quite so good, I was nervous to give her a not so good. So, if I had a bad student teacher, I don't know what I'd do. (Mark)
Difficult conversations	It would've been nice [to have some help in coaching to have difficult conversations]. […] if I knew that something was going to be uncomfortable, how am I going to approach this? And I probably would have gone to her supervisor first. And I'm like, "I gave her a 'disagree' here, and here's why," so we can positively shape it. But yeah, there was no training for me on that. (Jennifer)
Professional development	I think that refresher courses [in social and emotional issues] can always be good. […] I think that behaviors are so changing. You have kids with PTSD. [...] But I think you would have to offer it in a nice package, so to speak. (Rosalind) Probably, again, technology is not my strong suit. […] So, I probably should understand a little bit more and be more willing or open to using it in different ways. I just haven't brought that into my wheelhouse. […] And I think being able to shed some light again on some of the [social and emotional] situations that the kids are coming from and help them to understand. [...] I need that for myself, too, just because we're seeing more and more things that we haven't seen before. (Lori) I think one area would be working with an EA, an educational assistant. That's one thing that, again, I had to really be intentional about helping my, the teacher candidate with is, how do you work with the other adults in a building? (Charlotte)

(table continues)

Areas where the mentor teachers wanted additional information	Quotations
Lack of feedback on being a mentor teacher	But there were two times that I evaluated her, and we talked about that, but there wasn't any feedback ever given to me. And so, I know that she obviously talked to her supervisor about me and what I was doing, and none of that was ever relayed to me. We had a really good communication, so I'm pretty sure if something was wrong, they would have told me that. Like, "Hey, you need to do this better." But I didn't get any feedback, except from her, and it was like, "No, it was great." […] Not really, but I was thinking about you coming on and asking questions and that made me wonder if I was, like, if it didn't go well as me being a mentor teacher, would the district let me do it again? And I was like, "I don't know the answer to that." (Jennifer). But [what] maybe the university could pay attention to is just a follow-up with the cooperating teacher, not the student teacher, but the mentor teacher. There really isn't any follow-up. It's like, "Well, she's done now." And I fill out some surveys. […] If we don't talk about it [feedback for the mentor teacher], then there's no one telling me that. I'm just like, "Well, I don't know how that went. I've got to be ready for tomorrow's lessons, and here we go." (Violet)

The most surprising data in this section came from Violet and Jennifer, who wanted feedback on how they had performed as mentor teachers. All too often, mentor teachers are seen as experts in the field, but because education is not static, a teacher must keep learning and growing to remain effective. Without people providing feedback to mentor teachers, it is difficult for them to learn and grow. If the mentor teachers are unaware they are doing something wrong or might benefit from trying a different strategy, they would not know to adjust their practice.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility and validity are measures of whether the data presented are an authentic portrait of the phenomenon being studied (Miles et al., 2014). To understand

mentor teachers' experiences using a co-teaching model during student teaching, I interviewed current teachers who had just finished hosting a teacher candidate. Each teacher was interviewed three times over a three-week period. This timeframe gave the teachers the opportunity to reflect between interviews and helped me build trust with them (Creswell, 2013). Interviewing over time also allowed me to develop a sense of whether something external to the interview might affect the participant's responses (Seidman, 2013) and whether the participants were grappling with how to answer a question because they thought they needed to provide a publicly acceptable answer instead of revealing how they really felt (Patton, 2015). Finally, the three-interview process did prompt reflection among participants and caused the mentor teachers to consider the feedback they needed to learn and grow.

As another validation measure, when the interviews were completed and transcribed, participants had the opportunity to member-check their transcripts to ensure their responses were accurately represented. All members returned the transcripts and either agreed with the transcripts as written or made corrections to clarify their responses (Miles et al., 2014).

Transferability refers to how well a study's findings can be generalized to other contexts (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015). The participants in this study were public-school teachers who had participated in a university-based teacher-preparation program and had hosted a teacher candidate from a state university preparation program that must meet state standards for certification. The thick descriptions of the participants, setting,

and interview process are sufficiently described to allow for adequate comparisons with other similar samples.

Dependability examines whether the study's process is reasonably consistent over time (Miles et al., 2014). I have stated my role and status and given detailed explanations of how data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed, as suggested by my research questions. All transcripts were member-checked and returned by the participants (Creswell, 2013). Finally, this completed study and dissertation were reviewed by my faculty committee members, the Walden University IRB, and the Walden University Research Review Board.

Confirmability refers to a study's relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from researcher bias (Miles et al., 2014). I have stated my personal experience with university-based teacher-preparation programs and co-teaching. Before each round of interviews, I reviewed my questions and reflected so I was aware of any comments, facial expressions, or body language I might be likely to show (Creswell, 2013). The participants were also able to review our interview transcripts and make any corrections they felt were necessary to clarify their answers. The interview recordings and transcripts have been retained and secured, and they are available for analysis. By using inductive and deductive data analysis, maintaining awareness of my biases throughout the data-analysis process, and ensuring that conclusions are explicitly linked to the data, confirmability is established.

Summary

This qualitative study used a three-interview process, as suggested by Seidman (2013), to investigate the phenomenon of mentor teachers' growth during a co-teaching model of student teaching. Nine mentor teachers who utilized a co-teaching model for some or all of the time during which they hosted a teacher candidate in the most recent semester served as study participants. All the participating mentor teachers had gone through traditional, university-based teacher-preparation programs in their own teacher-certification process, although not all reported positive experiences. After the interviews were completed and data were coded, four themes and 23 subthemes emerged in relation to the three research questions.

Chapter 5 includes study results and discusses how the findings compare to current literature on the topic. It also includes an interpretation of findings within the context of the conceptual framework and includes recommendations for further research. Finally, implications for positive social change are discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

My purpose in this qualitative study was to examine the growth of nine mentor teachers who had hosted candidates from a midwestern university during a single semester of student teaching to determine how a co-teaching model of student teaching impacted their teaching practice and mentoring skills. The two areas of focus used to determine growth were growth in the mentor teachers' professional teaching practices and growth in coaching and mentoring skills. This study was initiated because a cohesive understanding of mentor teachers' role and development could help districts and EPPs look beyond a sole focus on teacher candidate growth and view the student-teaching experience as potential professional-development and teacher-leadership experiences for mentor teachers.

To determine growth, I conducted three-part interviews with the mentor teachers to recall their own experiences during student teaching, explore mentor teachers' expected roles and responsibilities, discuss mentor teachers' everyday practices, and reflect on how serving as a mentor teacher affected them professionally. The following key findings resulted from data analysis:

RQ1: Initial Expectations

- Teachers' expectations resulted from their own past experiences as student teachers. Most agreed that the co-teaching model they used with their current teacher candidates was more effective than the traditional takeover model used during their own student teaching. Six out of nine teachers reported

negative experiences in their own student teaching, including a lack of feedback and few opportunities to develop classroom-management skills. All teachers agreed that the more control their own mentor teachers had, the worse their student-teaching experiences were.

- Without formal training in coaching or mentoring or the necessary resources to guide them, mentor teachers in this study often relied on trial and error or their leadership experiences outside the classroom to guide their work as mentor teachers.

RQ2: Identity and Growth

- All mentor teachers reported experiencing growth in their own teaching practices because they worked with teacher candidates.
- Coaching a teacher candidate involves helping him or her reflect on a lesson and asking questions to help him or her gain a deeper understanding of teaching rather than telling him or her what to do. Eight out of nine mentor teachers indicated in their conversations about daily practice that they actively engaged in coaching actions while working with their teacher candidates. Only the newest mentor teacher provided no evidence of coaching.
- Mentoring a teacher candidate involves providing guidance about issues beyond the classroom, including policy, professionalism, and procedures. During conversations about daily practice, seven out of the nine mentor teachers in this study described mentoring actions. The two mentor teachers

with the least amount of experience as mentor teachers showed little to no evidence of mentoring, instead focusing on lesson planning.

- Mentor teachers reported they needed help to move away from transmitting information, which encourages teacher candidates to duplicate mentor teachers' practices, and towards transformation, where teacher candidates experience identity formation through reflection and questioning.

RQ3: Application of Learning and Growth

- Mentor teachers expressed the need for more feedback on how they performed their roles so they can improve. In addition to performance feedback, mentor teachers wanted additional training in a variety of areas, including evaluating their teacher candidates, working with struggling candidates, and emphasizing current issues in education such as social and emotional learning.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I present the research findings compared to the peer-reviewed literature that I described in Chapter 2. The section is organized by research questions and summarizes key findings for each question. Findings regarding the conceptual framework follow the research questions.

RQ1: How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

In Research Question 1, I addressed meaning and community described in Wenger's (1998) components for situated learning. In terms of meaning, the first key finding was that the majority of teachers believed the co-teaching model they used with

their teacher candidates was more effective than the traditional model that had been used during their own student-teaching experiences. Of the participants, six of nine teachers reported having negative experiences in their own student teaching, including a lack of feedback and the underdevelopment of classroom-management skills due to their disconnection from and lack of collaboration with mentor teachers, who were often absent from the classroom. The teachers in this study agreed that the more control a mentor teacher exercises to force the candidate to replicate his or her own practice, the worse the teacher candidate's experience.

Feiman-Nemser (2012) noted that learning to teach begins for people as children when they observe the interactions of their own teachers and parents, and whether or not they know it, much of a teacher's behavior is an imitation of his or her own favorite teachers. These experiences, rather than analytical and reflective pedagogical practices, tend to be the driving force behind learning. A mentor teacher's first experience of mentoring comes from his or her own experience as a teacher candidate (van Ginkel et al., 2016). Therefore, it was important to explore participants' relationships to the mentoring they had experienced during their own student teaching.

All participants in this study had completed a traditional, university-based EPP similar to that of the teacher candidates they hosted. One key difference, however, was that all the mentor teachers participated in a traditional takeover model rather than a co-teaching model when they completed their student teaching. The mentor teachers reported that as teacher candidates, their experiences varied in quality and although they all had used the same model, some had limited control over their classrooms because of

domineering mentor teachers, whereas others had complete control because of supportive or absent mentor teachers. A study by Guise et al. (2017) in which mentor teachers did not receive training in coaching and mentoring but did receive training in co-teaching showed that regardless of the training, without scaffolded support for mentor teachers, three out of eight teaching teams exhibited behaviors consistent with traditional takeover student-teaching practices. The current study's findings concur with Guise et al.'s (2017) findings. Although all the participants in this study claimed to use co-teaching during some or all of the student-teaching experience, three demonstrated practices that were more consistent with the traditional takeover model they had experienced during their own student teaching, including not fostering collaborative relationships outside the classroom and utilizing little collaborative planning.

Teachers volunteer to serve as mentor teachers for a host of reasons, not all of which prove beneficial to teacher candidates, and they are often unequipped for the role (Clarke et al., 2014). Almost all the participants in this study responded to an email asking for volunteers to serve as mentor teachers, and a few reported having to be persuaded by building administrators or university personnel to work with teacher candidates. Other than being matched based on grade level and certification, there were no other criteria for pairing mentor teachers with teacher candidates. Studies by Darling-Hammond (2014) and LaBoskey and Richert (2002) discussed the importance of compatible placements as being conducive to growth for both mentor teachers and teacher candidates. When it came to reasons for volunteering as mentor teachers, participants in this study cited giving back to the profession, providing a space for teacher

candidates to gain experience, experiencing personal satisfaction, and gaining the opportunity to learn something from teacher candidates. These personal reasons are consistent with studies that show teachers who volunteer to take on the role of mentor teacher generally do so to help others but are often unequipped for the role (Clarke, 2006, Clarke et al., 2014; Gareis & Grant, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2015; Jaspers et al., 2014), or they take a teacher candidate to learn something for themselves (van Ginkel et al., 2016).

A second key finding centered on the idea that without formal training in coaching and mentoring or resources to guide them, mentor teachers often relied on trial and error or their leadership experiences outside the classroom to guide their work. When it came to training for the mentor teacher role, participants had various types and levels of experience prior to hosting a teacher candidate, but the EPP provided no formal training for the role. Although co-teaching training was available, most did not take advantage of it either as a refresher course or as initial training. Even with previous training, the information alone was not enough for them to successfully coach and mentor a teacher candidate.

Although training is important, the mentor teachers' perspectives on their role and expectations of what they should do were paramount in the way they approached the task. Two mentor teachers, Charlotte and Rosie, had received formal training in cognitive coaching prior to hosting a teacher candidate, but despite similar training, each took a different approach when working with her particular teacher candidate. Charlotte mentored from a developmental stance in which she utilized reflective questioning with her teacher candidate to help the candidate develop a unique teaching identity and

explore connections between teaching and learning. Rosie used an instrumental stance focused on effective teaching practices that mimicked her own practice rather than allowing the candidate to develop his or her unique teaching identity. She seemed intent on having her candidate replicate what was already going on in the classroom, determining the candidate would be successful when she was able to demonstrate independence. Rosie's experience is consistent with Goodwin et al.'s (2016) study, which examined the idea that even when a mentor teacher has training on coaching, if he or she demonstrates an instrumental perspective in which he or she does not believe she has much to learn, the focus is more on replication than development. In fact, determining whether the mentor teacher had an instrumental or developmental perspective is vital to how mentor teachers perform their roles. Violet used mindfulness training from her yoga instruction to guide her developmental perspective, which helped her teacher candidate develop connections between teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Mentor teachers such as Jennifer, who had little to no formal training in coaching and mentoring, relied on past experience to guide their work. This trial-and-error method, which Allison also claimed to use, can have detrimental effects on teacher candidates. In the continued absence of training, mentor teachers repeat the cycle of trial and error and use their experiences as a basis for their work with future teacher candidates. Pylman's (2016) case study, which illustrated the issue of training mentor teachers to guide reflection, focused on the planning process and was designed to help mentor teachers understand the importance of engaging in a co-planning process to achieve the shift from

mentor teacher telling to mentor teacher questioning and guiding reflective thinking. Pylman's study provided recommendations for scaffolding mentor teacher learning and providing the time and support for mentor teachers to learn about, try out, and reflect on mentoring practices. These results are consistent with Mena et al.'s (2017) recommendation to define the mentor role because learning to teach does not happen naturally by observing and modeling. Table 23 shows the varied types of training mentor teachers attributed to helping them perform their role.

Table 23

Training for Mentor Teacher Role and Previous Mentoring Experience

Participant	Candidates hosted	Type of Training for Mentor Teacher Role
Haley	6+	MA in Counselor Education Yoga instructor
Violet	3-5	Read co-teaching paperwork from university and watched video Administrative certification Had previous cognitive coaching training
Charlotte	6+	Head of mentoring program in district
Allison	6+	Experience (trial and error)
Jennifer	0	None Attended MSU workshop on co-teaching
Mark	1-2	Athletics coach Lead teacher in district
Rosie	3-5	Had previous cognitive coaching training
Rosalind	6+	Attended MSU workshop on co-teaching
Lori	6+	Attended MSU workshop on co-teaching

A mentor teacher's role is complex and involves coaching, mentoring, and supervising as he or she nurtures the teacher candidate's development (Ambrosetti et al., 2014). In an extensive review of the literature on cooperating teachers, Clarke et al. (2014) also noted the importance of mentor teachers understanding their role in student teaching. The 185 articles examined for types of mentor-teacher participation during student teaching resulted in 11 categories. Understanding what the role entailed guided mentor teachers' actions. When the mentor teachers in this study were asked about the mentor teacher role prior to student teaching, the participants talked about providing opportunities for development and supporting teacher candidates. Three participants talked about preparing teacher candidates to take on their own classrooms by modeling and providing space to learn, but they only one talked about helping teacher candidates develop as teachers by not having the candidates mimic them. Mark, Lori, and Violet talked about how uncertain they were of their roles until they attended co-teaching training and realized how different the experience would be for their teacher candidates compared to their own experiences. The co-teaching training provided a common language and understanding for those mentor teachers who learned a new model to explore and a new way of thinking about their role.

Becoming a teacher is not just about the transmission of skills and content from mentor to novice; it is also about transformation as the newcomer develops his or her practice and the ability to negotiate meaning to form an identity and join a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). At work, a community of practice is a group of people who work with their colleagues to get a job done while preserving or developing the self,

having fun, and creating a practice to fulfill employers' and clients' requirements (Wenger, 1998). In its collective practice, a community determines what is acceptable as competence and expects that of new members. Education is not static, and successful communities have members who are always developing and redefining their practice to incorporate changes due to research, data, technology, and policies. While some change within a community of practice is necessary, for a person to experience radical growth, he or she must have the community's support (Wenger, 1998). Solomon, Eriksen, Smestad, Rodal, and Bjerke's (2017) study focused on prospective teachers and mentor teachers in communities of practice and demonstrated what happened when the support of the community was lacking. The qualitative study of 52 mentor teachers found that variation in mentoring styles and perceptions about the teacher candidate's knowledge and skills played a part in preventing the teacher candidate from becoming a legitimate peripheral participant in the community of practice. Young and MacPhail's (2014) study of 18 physical-education mentor teachers in Ireland showed that without training and resources, some mentor teachers never moved beyond peripheral participation as mentor teachers, and teacher leaders in the evolving community of practice did not grow as mentors.

Like the teachers in the Solomon et al. (2017) and Young and MacPhail (2014) studies, communities of practice for mentor teachers in this study were an integral part of their everyday practice. Of the nine participants, eight reported being part of supportive communities of practice made up of their peers. Haley, who did not have a supportive community of practice, reported recent administrative changes that would provide the supports and guidance needed to address the resistance to change seen among the more

reluctant members of her community. Haley's community of practice was not with her peers, but with the new administrator who had come from the faculty and understood the problems she was facing.

Working with colleagues is only one part of the community of practice. On a larger scale, a district's climate and culture can be a significant factor in how teachers feel about their communities of practice. Often, a district's or school's climate and culture is set by the leadership and can be detected by observing employee morale. A quantitative study of 3,215 teachers from 64 schools in two districts by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found that teachers who trusted their principals were more likely to communicate with them about problems and actively work toward problem-solving. Many things influence climate and culture, including politics that influence policy and budget, collaboration, and communication. Andragogy theory emphasizes the idea that adults want to be respected for their expertise and problem-solving abilities, feel what they are learning is relevant to their job, and know they have choices (Knowles & Cole, 1996). In schools with a top-down hierarchy rather than distributed leadership, teachers are more likely to feel change is being done *to* them rather than *with* them.

The mentor teachers in this study overwhelmingly reported negative school or district climates and cultures, even if their own communities of practice positively impacted their practices. In some cases, external factors such as the budget lowered morale, but in others, it was poor leadership that led to top-down decision-making and a lack of choice for mentor teachers. Those teachers were more likely to go to the members of their communities of practice when they needed support with student-teaching issues.

Only one teacher, Mark, reported a positive climate and culture, and he relied on his administration for support rather than his community of practice when working through issues with his teacher candidate. It is interesting that other than Mark, none of the mentor teachers who had positive communities of practice looked to their administration for support, despite the fact that administrators receive training in working with other adults and are supposed to model instructional leadership.

Haley was another participant who looked to administrative support during her role as a mentor teacher, but she had an unsupportive community of practice. Both Haley's and Mark's practices are supported by Breen's (2015) qualitative study, which showed that within a community of practice, participants need prompting from more experienced practitioners to move from the ZPD, where they are to grow, through the process of situated engagement and negotiation. In Mark's case, he saw his administrator as better able than his peers to advise him on supervision and evaluation issues. In Haley's case, she saw her administrator as being more experienced in the district and supporting her growth but remaining connected to teaching because he had recently been a fellow faculty member.

Participants in this study formed many of their expectations about the mentor teacher's role from their own experiences and what had their communities of practice defined as competency. When additional training or information was not available, mentor teachers looked to their own experiences as teacher candidates or the trial and error of their previous work with teacher candidates. For many, it was a case of not knowing what they did not know. When training was available, it made a difference and

showed mentor teachers that there was another way to work with candidates. However, training alone was not enough; the mentor teachers must also have had a developmental mindset rather than an instrumental mindset to change their mentoring practices.

RQ2: How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?

Research Question 2 focused on the situated learning component of practice, and the first key finding was that all mentor teachers experienced growth in their teaching practice from working with a teacher candidate. In describing their daily practices with teacher candidates, mentor teachers reflected on their growth and the candidates' growth. When it came to reflecting on practice, all mentor teachers described how hosting teacher candidates helped them improve their own practices, whether it was by gaining a new perspective, learning new technology, trying something new, or developing better organizational skills. This result is consistent with studies of how co-teaching serves as embedded professional development due to increased communication and collaboration, which leads teachers to reflect on their own practices as they make them explicit to their teacher candidates and deconstruct these practices (Diana, 2014; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016; Grothe, 2013; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012).

A second key finding was how many teachers implemented coaching and mentoring practices during student teaching. Eight out of nine mentor teachers indicated in their conversations about daily practices that they actively engaged in coaching actions while working with their teacher candidates. Only the newest mentor teacher described no evidence of coaching. During the conversations about daily practice, seven out of nine

mentor teachers described mentoring actions as defined by the EPP's handbook and focused on policies, practices, and procedures outside the classroom. The two mentor teachers with the least amount of experience as mentor teachers showed little to no evidence of mentoring, instead focusing on lesson planning.

When it came to teacher candidates' practices, the most difficult part for mentor teachers was when the candidates struggled. Pylman's (2016) case study on co-planning and Stanulis et al.'s (2018) larger study of ten mentor teachers that focused on educative mentoring showed the importance of training and reflection for effective mentoring practices and mentor and teacher candidate growth. Rather than allow teacher candidates to take charge from the beginning, co-teaching is supposed to help mentor teachers scaffold how the teacher candidate learns to take the lead in the classroom, but sometimes teacher candidates take on too much too early and end up overwhelmed. In trying to maintain a balance between teacher candidate learning and student learning, mentor teachers had to determine where to draw the line and step in, particularly when student learning suffered.

In this study, over half the mentor teachers knew teacher candidates had to learn how to stumble and recover to learn and grow. A few reported that although it was difficult to watch, they allowed their teacher candidates to make mistakes without rushing in to save the day. By asking questions, they got the candidates to reflect on the lesson and figure out how to improve for next time. Mark and Rosie admitted letting their teacher candidates stumble and asking questions to guide reflection but then stepping in to show or tell them what to do. Jennifer, the newest mentor teacher, took control when

her teacher candidate struggled, and rather than ask questions to get her to reflect and modify her practice, simply planned the lesson and gave it to her teacher candidate to teach. This example of single-loop learning, where a problem is fixed, and double-loop learning, where a broader perspective is taken and questions are asked to get to the root of a problem, provides a lens through which to view mentor-teacher development (Argyris, 2006). Participants who believed failure was simply a problem to be solved would have approached the situation with a single-loop fixed remedy that could be transmitted from mentor to teacher candidate using an instrumental perspective. While this approach provided answers, it did not allow the teacher candidate to learn from the experience and understand how to recognize and fix future mistakes. Those that utilized double-loop learning saw failure as an opportunity for growth and part of the transformation process; they would have taken a developmental approach and asked questions so the teacher candidate arrived at his or her own conclusion. The three teachers who took control thought they were being helpful, but unfortunately without explaining why and how planning and teaching should work, they prevented the teacher candidates from learning how to recover or solve problems for themselves.

As noted in studies, including one of ten mentor teachers by Stanulis et al. (2018) and another of 101 mentor teachers by Gareis and Grant (2014), training for mentor teachers in coaching and educative mentoring helped teacher candidates by focusing on instruction that went beyond the minimum standards of competent performance. To be an effective coach, teachers must understand adult learning and use effective strategies to guide reflection to explore the thinking and understanding behind the practices. Jaspers et

al.'s (2014) case study of seven mentor teachers showed that if mentor teachers do not understand their role, they might not be able to discuss elements of their own practice, resulting in a missed opportunity for both the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate. When it came to coaching, all participating mentor teachers except the two with the least amount of experience were effective at guiding reflection to focus on student learning and teacher candidate growth. Mark, who had hosted one teacher candidate previously, guided reflection on the lesson but not necessarily student learning. Jennifer, who had never hosted a teacher candidate before, collaborated but did not really guide reflection. Without a shared understanding of coaching and mentoring that could have been gained through training, Mark and Jennifer struggled in their roles. This finding is consistent with Hudson's (2013) mixed method study of 101 mentor teachers reported that mentoring about pedagogical practice occurred with the majority of teachers and Mena et al.'s (2017) study of four mentor teachers who noted it is important for EPPs to define the mentor role because learning to teach does not just happen by observing and modeling.

In her work on educative mentoring, Feiman-Nemser (2012) described mentoring as a role, a process, and an experience that is often used to reward a teacher for his or her expertise and allowing him or her to develop leadership skills while staying in the classroom. The guidelines for mentor teachers provided by the MSU student teaching handbook included orienting the teacher candidate to school's building, policies, and procedures; understanding the school's and community's culture and socioeconomic status; helping teacher candidates get to know students; demonstrating the importance of detailed and thoughtful planning; involving teacher candidates in professional teaching

responsibilities, including attending meetings and grading; setting aside time each day to discuss, plan, and provide feedback; allowing teacher candidates to make mistakes; and not expecting teacher candidates to be duplicates of their mentor teachers. Other than the time set aside each day to discuss, plan, and provide feedback, the tasks listed are all consistent with the role of a mentor rather than a coach. Although the guidelines are helpful for mentor teachers and help define their role, they do not elaborate on how any of the tasks should be done. The results of Ambrosetti's (2014) study of nine mentor teachers who completed a mentoring course showed that defining the nebulous concept of mentoring and providing specific knowledge about the mentoring process was beneficial to teacher candidates and mentor teachers. The course helped all the mentor teachers change their mentoring practices as a result of the information and skills they learned throughout the course.

Participants in this study knew that being a teacher involved more than planning, teaching, and assessing, and they tried to help their teacher candidates navigate the spoken and unspoken rules of policy, procedures, and professionalism. Four mentor teachers did just as the guidelines asked and introduced their teacher candidates to the other elements of teaching, while three teachers took a nurturing stance and took mentoring beyond the professional into the personal sphere because teaching and learning are not confined to a classroom during designated hours. However, Jennifer and Mark, the two newest mentor teachers, did more collaboration than mentoring. Whether it was due to a lack of time or not knowing how to approach the conversation, or because it did not happen during their own student teaching, feedback was reserved for lessons and

planning rather than on navigating other aspects of teaching. Stanulis et al.'s (2018) study of ten mentor teachers and how they planned, observed, debriefed, and analyzed student work showed that without supports, conversations with teacher candidates were surface-level and focused on what happened instead of educative, which goes beneath the surface to explore why and how things happen. Jennifer's and Mark's actions are consistent with Stanulis et al.'s (2018) findings, which showed when a teacher is left alone to learn to mentor, the conversation during planning time often revolves around tips and survival strategies. Like learning to teach, learning to mentor requires interacting with a more-knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978).

In this era of accountability, classroom control issues remain a concern. Co-teaching is supposed to make the mentor teacher/teacher candidate relationship less hierarchical, but ultimately the mentor teacher is the teacher of record in the classroom responsible for student learning. The mentor teacher wants the teacher candidate to learn, but he or she also must determine where to draw the line when the teacher candidate makes mistakes. Jaspers et al.'s (2014) study of seven mentor teachers in the Netherlands showed that this conflict between the roles of mentor and teacher of record could result in an environment that is too structured, where the teacher candidate has little opportunity to learn from mistakes.

The mentor teachers in this study noted it was difficult to give up control of their classrooms, especially when their teacher candidates struggled to get students to learn, which placed the roles of teachers and mentor teacher in conflict. Jennifer and Rosie both mentioned how difficult it was to give up control. Jennifer, who had had a controlling

mentor teacher during her own student teaching, did not know any other way to deal with a struggling student teacher and believed taking over and modeling was beneficial for her. Rosie, who was a head teacher with training in coaching, knew the importance of giving up control but did not want to give up her relationship with her students. As the head teacher, she was used to being the center of focus for students and teachers in her school, and she had a hard time giving up some of that power.

During student teaching, mentor teachers develop a teaching curriculum to help the teacher candidates as newcomers develop the skills and dispositions they need to demonstrate competence and be accepted into the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the traditional model, there is little prospect for the mentor teacher to have the same situated learning opportunity because he or she does not actively participate, as he or she would with a co-teaching model. Co-teaching provides situated learning opportunities for both the teacher candidate and mentor teacher throughout the student-teaching experience. One benefit of co-teaching, as Bacharach and Heck (2012) have noted, is that mentor teachers report an emphasis on their continued professional growth. Guise et al.'s (2017) and Hartnett et al.'s (2013) studies showed that for co-teaching to be beneficial, it requires buy-in from the mentor teacher, which is consistent with this study's findings. If the teacher did not understand the model or did not think it prepared the teacher candidate for the realities of the classroom, he or she was likely to ignore or misuse the model. While most mentor teachers in this study found co-teaching beneficial to the teacher candidates, students, and mentor teachers, three teachers did not think the model was realistic. Jennifer and Mark were the two mentor teachers with the

least amount of experience hosting teacher candidates. Mark had attended training and spoke of how fun it was to work in the co-teaching model; he appeared to do so with some success. Jennifer had never participated in co-teaching training, so her interpretation of co-teaching was to write the lesson plans and give them to the teacher candidate to teach. Allison was an experienced teacher who did not believe the co-teaching model gave the teacher candidate enough solo time, and she favored a model in which the mentor modeled a lesson and the teacher candidate tried to replicate it. However, the co-teaching training on MSU's model this EPP uses emphasizes that teacher candidates need solo time. It is unclear whether this mentor teacher understood the training or attended co-teaching training at all. The literature on co-teaching is clear that both teachers must have training so they understand co-teaching (Kinne et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2010) for it to be successful.

A third key finding was that mentor teachers needed help to move away from transmission of information, which encourages teacher candidates to duplicate mentor teachers' practices, and towards transformation, where teacher candidates experience identity formation through reflection and questioning. In situated learning, the mentor teacher has an increased opportunity to develop coaching and mentoring skills as he or she works side-by-side with the candidate. Whether mentor teachers view co-teaching as an opportunity to create a duplicate of themselves through transmission of skills, content, and practices or whether they approach the experience as an opportunity for teacher candidates to transform from students to competent practitioners determines which approach and practices they will use on a daily basis. When it comes to issues like

planning, it is often more expedient for mentor teachers to tell teacher candidates to develop a lesson and then hand them all the resources they have curated in an attempt to help the teacher candidate and save time. However, Pylman's (2016) and Stanulis et al.'s (2018) studies have also discussed that handing over resources without explaining how they were curated and developed in the first place encourages mimicry and deprives the teacher candidate of learning the how and why of teaching in order to focus on the what and when. Teacher candidates must understand the learners in their classroom and develop their lessons and practices with that in mind. Of the mentor teachers in the study, Violet, Rosalind, Lori, and Charlotte actively promoted transformation in their teacher candidates by encouraging them to develop their own resources and unique teaching styles. Four others believed that sharing resources using a transmission model that encouraged teacher candidates to mimic the mentor teachers was a form of modeling. These mentors, many of whom had the same thing done to them when they were teacher candidates, did not realize the missed opportunity for teacher-candidate growth.

Time is one of the biggest obstacles to effectively co-teaching and guiding transformation (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015; Guise, Habib, et al., 2016). If mentor teachers want to move beyond transmission to transformation, they need time to engage in reflective dialogue (Heckert et al., 2013; Izadinia, 2016; Johnson & Napper-Owen, 2011). One thing that was clear among the mentor teachers in this study was that there was never enough time during the school day to reflect and plan. Although most of the mentor teachers reflected with their candidates throughout the day, all but one made themselves available outside school hours to provide feedback, discuss planning, or

engage in reflection. Realizing that sometimes it takes people longer to process the day's events, the mentor teachers made themselves available to their teacher candidates and worked around family schedules. The mentor teacher who did not was a coach and was occupied both before and after school with athletics, so time during the school day was spent on lesson-planning and basic reflection.

In the end, the mentor teachers all described growing in their teaching practices while hosting teacher candidates in a co-teaching model. However, not all teachers grew in their coaching and mentoring skills. Many teachers had issues letting go of control, not all bought into co-teaching's benefits, and time was an important factor in guiding reflection and planning. However, the biggest factor in determining if mentor teachers developed coaching and mentoring skills was whether they began with a developmental mindset that actively worked to help their teacher candidates transform into fully certified teachers. Training in adult learning, coaching, mentoring, and co-teaching were important, but they were not always a guarantee of a developmental mindset. Mentor teachers with an instrumental mindset that was geared toward transmitting information to their teacher candidates in order to replicate their own practices struggled to develop coaching and mentoring skills. These mentor teachers more often lacked training and had issues letting go of control. This finding is consistent with Rytivaara and Kershner (2012), who found that the mentor teacher's growth in a co-teaching model is dependent on the training the team receives and whether the model is implemented with fidelity without a distinct hierarchy present. Without training for the role of mentor teacher to open their perspectives and show options beyond their experiences, participants were

more likely to observe and report on what they saw in practice rather than inquire into the why and how of practice (Clarke et al., 2014).

RQ3: How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?

The third research question focused on Wenger's (1998) situated learning component of identity, or learning as becoming. A key finding was that mentor teachers wanted feedback on how they had performed in their role so they could improve. In addition to performance feedback, mentor teachers wanted additional training in a variety of areas, including evaluating the teacher candidate, working with struggling candidates, and addressing current issues in education such as social and emotional learning.

Teachers who serve as mentor teachers are often isolated during student teaching, with no network of mentor teachers to form a community of practice around coaching and mentoring issues and focus on the characteristics of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of coaching and mentoring (Wenger, 1998). Instead, mentor teachers remain in their own local community of practice that focuses on the mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire of teaching practices. Serving as a mentor teacher has both direct and indirect impacts on mentor teachers' communities of practice.

Some mentor teachers identified direct impacts on their communities of practice, including more closely examining curriculum and encouraging others to take on the role of mentor teacher. Indirectly, some mentor teachers reinforced the expertise and standards set by their communities of practice in seeking advice when their teacher

candidates were struggling or providing feedback to the EPP on the student-teaching experience. There is an absence of literature about how the coaching and mentoring skills needed to serve as an effective mentor teacher, particularly in a co-teaching model, contribute to or change an existing community of practice, particularly because those skills fall outside the realm of normal teaching practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) speak of members starting on the periphery of the community of practice and advancing to full-member status through a process of becoming. Full members shift the community when the most experienced members learn and develop through mutual engagement and introduce new ideas and resources (Wenger, 1998), but what happens when those who are learning are not the most experienced teachers or the community of practice is resistant to change?

Knowing the importance of reflection, mentor teachers were asked what advice they would give to a colleague about serving as a mentor teacher. Characteristics cited included flexibility, allowing teacher candidates to make mistakes, getting teacher candidates involved in the aspects of teaching that go beyond the classroom, and having realistic expectations. Mentor teachers were also asked how the mentor-teacher role had changed since they did their student teaching. Most participants said that today, student teaching is much more of a team effort, where both people have the opportunity to learn. Only Allison, who did not believe the co-teaching model was realistic, thought the mentor-teacher role had not changed very much. These findings are consistent with the developmental mindset explored by van Ginkel et al. (2016), who knew that mentors also

learned by mentoring and understood that knowledge development took place over time through co-thinking and co-learning.

When mentor teachers were asked about how hosting a teacher candidate had impacted their practice, the stance they took played a large part in what they learned. Those who adopted a developmental stance were deeply reflective and spoke of learning to let go of control, which was no small achievement. Those that let go learned how to support their teacher candidates and encouraged growth and development without having the teacher candidates replicate their own practices. The three mentor teachers that took an instrumental stance took a much more superficial view and spoke of more practical aspects of the experience, like learning new art projects, being better prepared, and getting more organized. These findings are consistent with the instrumental perspective described by van Ginkel et al. (2016) in which mentor teachers saw themselves as maestros who did not feel they had much to learn.

Understanding adult learning is a key to effective coaching and mentoring. Andragogy focuses on the four principles that apply to adult learning and include being involved with planning and evaluating their instruction; using experience, including failure, as the basis for learning; learning subjects that have an immediate impact on their lives; and using problem-centered rather than content-centered learning (Knowles, 1990). When asked about the difference between teaching teacher candidates and teaching students, those three mentor teachers who had adopted the instrumental stance also stated that they had treated adult and student learning the same. They did not understand how pedagogy and andragogy were different. The mentor teachers who were deeply reflective

cited many ways adult learning was different from student learning, including needing more choice and more say, taking into account adults' experiences and perspectives, and leveraging teacher candidates' intrinsic motivation to be in the classroom. The developmental teachers learned how to collaborate and communicate effectively with adults.

Mentor teachers were often isolated because there were few teacher candidates in a particular building, so they sometimes needed help when their candidates were struggling. While most mentor teachers reached out to the university supervisor for help, one turned to his building administrator and another turned to her community of practice. Turning to the university supervisor was a way for the mentor teachers to make sure they understood the EPP's expectations and to develop confidence in their mentoring practice (Gut et al., 2014).

The experience of mentoring a teacher candidate and seeking assistance from the university supervisor brought up a question about the areas of difficulty for which mentor teachers would like help. Consistent with studies that cite the importance of mentor teacher training for the role (Jaspers et al., 2014; Kinne et al., 2016; Mena et al., 2017; Rytivaara & Kershner, 2012), participants in this study wanted additional training on how to deal with struggling teacher candidates, evaluate a teacher candidate, work with an additional adult in the classroom such as a special educator or paraprofessional, and have difficult conversations with a teacher candidate. Other areas in which the mentor teachers wanted assistance were technology and social and emotional learning to help them help their students. Most surprising were the two mentor teachers who wanted feedback on

how they had performed in their roles as mentor teachers. This finding is significant because one of the mentor teachers who wanted to know how she had performed had never hosted a teacher candidate before and tended to have an instrumental stance in her mentoring. Both mentor teachers pointed out that in the absence of feedback, they would not know what to adjust so they could grow in their mentoring practice for next time. No literature currently examines the idea of providing coaching to the mentor teacher during the student-teaching process, but the idea that these teachers want to learn and grow in their practice as mentors means it is an area that needs further study.

Mentor teachers in this study used the knowledge and experience they had gained while hosting teacher candidates and applied those benefits outside their classrooms, including examining more closely the curriculum, establishing the difference between teaching adults and teaching children, seeking out mentoring expertise when they needed help with their teacher candidates, and helping move their communities of practice forward with what they learned about their own teaching practices. While mentor teachers did mention coaching actions such as guiding reflection for their teacher candidates and mentoring actions such as guiding candidates through areas of policy and professionalism, it does not necessarily indicate they grew in these areas. According to Wenger (1998), growth is not just about a person's actions but also how they talk about it. In some participating mentor teachers' cases, the way they spoke about how they had conducted coaching and mentoring showed their relationships with teacher candidates was much more transactional than transformational in nature.

Interpretation in the Context of the Conceptual Framework

Several of the main findings of the current study align with the ideas of situated learning set forth by Lave and Wenger (1991). While almost all the mentor teachers used coaching or mentoring strategies during student teaching, several teachers used those strategies to encourage their teacher candidates to mimic their own actions in an apprenticeship model rather than encourage them to develop their own unique teaching styles. Growth was not determined by the mentor teachers' practices alone but also by how they spoke about their experiences. Only when the mentor teachers explained their actions did growth, or a lack of growth, become clear. The conceptual framework that guided this study emerged from Lave and Wenger's (1991) research on situated learning, legitimate peripheral participation, and communities of practice. For Lave and Wenger (1991), an apprenticeship model in which someone learns by doing is not enough, but participants wishing to be accepted into a community of practice must engage in a manner that demonstrates their learning and knowing. Table 24 shows the alignment of Wenger's components for socially situated learning with the corresponding research question and the interview in which this component was explored.

Table 24

Use of Wenger's (1998) Components for Socially Situated Learning

Component	Corresponding RQ	Interview
1. Meaning: A way of talking about our (changing) ability individually or collectively to experience our life and the world as meaningful	RQ1: How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	Interview 1
2. Practice: A way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action	RQ2: How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	Interview 2
3. Community: A way of talking about the social configurations in which enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognizable as competence	RQ1 How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	Interview 1
4. Identity: A way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities (Wenger, 1998, p. 5)	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	Interview 3

During the participant interviews, I asked mentor teachers about their actions during student teaching, but I also listened to how they spoke about meaning, practice, community, and identity to gauge whether there was a change in their learning because of their work with the teacher candidate. Mentor teachers were in a situated learning environment when they hosted a teacher candidate in a co-teaching model, but it remained to be seen if and how that growth would manifest.

Regarding the component of meaning, or participants' changing ability to experience their lives and the world as meaningful, hosting a teacher candidate had a

profound impact on several mentor teachers. During the first round of interviews, Violet spoke of letting go of control because she was on the downside of her career, she realized she did not have to be in charge to be effective, and it was time to pass on her knowledge. Her recent experience as a yoga instructor guided her reflective practices in the classroom. Charlotte saw hosting teacher candidates as giving back to the profession.

In the second round of interviews, the mentor teachers discussed the component of practice. During student teaching all the mentor teachers experienced growth in their own teaching practices and claimed they gained new knowledge or skills from working with their teacher candidates. Whether it was learning new technology like Rosie, Violet, and Haley did or gaining new perspectives like Jennifer and Allison did, situated learning took the form of embedded professional development for these mentor teachers who, in turn, used what they learned to enhance their communities of practice.

Community, or the idea of determining enterprises as worth pursuing where participation is recognizable as competence, played a significant part in why teachers hosted teacher candidates. During the first round of interviews, the two newest mentor teachers had different reasons for working with teacher candidates. Mark was convinced by his administration to work with a teacher candidate. He had not volunteered and did not feel competent to do so, but the nudge from his administrator was a way of showing she believed him to be competent. As someone within his community of practice, Mark's administrator signaled that he was considered competent and it was time to try a teacher leadership role. Jennifer volunteered to take a teacher candidate because she saw it as a rite of passage once a teacher became tenured.

During the third and final round of interviews, changing identity, or a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming, was evident in mentor teachers like Violet and Jennifer, who realized after reflecting on the interviews that they had changed but still had much to learn. These mentor teachers wanted feedback on their performance to make sure that when they served as mentor teachers again, they would be more effective. However, a few teachers like Emily and Rosie admitted they did not change much at all. Rosie wanted her teacher candidate to replicate her practice and struggled to let her candidate take charge because she did not want to give up control of the classroom or her relationships with students. Emily did not think the teacher candidates got much from working in a co-teaching classroom and instead favored the idea of teaching and modeling a lesson first and then encouraging the teacher candidate to mimic the lesson. For Emily and Rosie, there was no identity growth.

In the end, situated learning happened to some extent for all the mentor teachers in the study in at least one area. The idea that the mentor teachers did not grow in all areas speaks to the idea that mentor teachers need supports to help them progress and develop coaching and mentoring skills necessary to be teacher leaders. What most mentor teachers lack is a community of practice of mentor teachers that share an understanding of the role and what competence looks like. When isolated without active supports, mentor teachers use the resources they have available. The fact that all the participants grew in their practice while serving as mentor teachers is significant and worth additional research.

Limitations of the Study

The nine volunteer participants of this study served as mentor teachers in the spring of 2018 and hosted teacher candidates from a single Midwestern state university EPP. The mentor teachers in this study were solicited as part of a convenience sample; therefore, the study results cannot be generalized to the larger population of mentor teachers in terms of geography or to the mentor teachers working with other EPPs in private and public institutions of higher education.

All mentor teachers met the criteria for the study and used a co-teaching model for some or all the time they worked with their teacher candidates. All the mentor teachers met the state requirements for serving as mentor teachers and were public-school teachers. All the participants took part in three in-person interviews and completed the member-checking process by reviewing their interview transcripts for accuracy and to ensure that the responses best represented their thoughts on a particular question.

One limitation was the timing between interviews. With three rounds of interviews happening at the end of the school year, scheduling was a challenge. While all mentor teachers participated in three in-person interviews per person, two participants had to complete two interviews in one day because of scheduling issues. These two mentor teachers did not have the same amount of time as other participants to reflect on their previous responses. The interviews did spark reflection among participants, however, with two specifically mentioning the impact of the reflective process at the conclusion of the interviews.

A second limitation was the fidelity with which co-teaching was used. The participants did not have a shared understanding of what co-teaching was and was not. One of the participants had not gone through co-teaching training at all, and although she claimed she had cotaught with her teacher candidate, she demonstrated only a basic understanding of the model, which led to her doing most of the planning. Another teacher questioned the amount of solo time each candidate should have, which led to the questions of whether she had gone through co-teaching training, and if so, how recently.

Due to my own experience as a mentor teacher and someone who currently works in an EPP, I experienced no problems establishing trustworthiness with study participants. The guarantee of anonymity for participants through the consent form and the fact that I was from the east coast and not associated with anyone from the EPP or the district further allowed candidates to trust that nothing they said in the interviews would cause them harm in the future. Trustworthiness with the mentor teachers was established because the teachers chose to participate in the study, had the opportunity to select the interview locations, were given the interview topics in advance, and could cancel their participation at any time. Because of my background as a teacher working with a teacher-preparation program, I was aware of issues where I might be biased and was consciously aware of my body language and facial expressions during the interviews. Thus, I worked to limit my bias through bracketing my own experiences and those of the previous mentor teachers with whom I have worked.

Recommendations

Learning to teach is a cycle that involves learning theory and content, and then having the space, guidance, and support to apply that information and develop teaching skills through experience. Learning to teach is a team effort that requires the support of the EPP and the school district on a broad level, but on an individual level, it relies on the teacher candidate, mentor teacher, and clinical supervisor. Because there are so many actors in clinical preparation, any innovation or improvements must take a multi-pronged approach.

In terms of further research, any study that examines co-teaching must examine the extent to which the teaching triad of mentor teacher, teacher candidate, and clinical supervisor are trained in co-teaching. In order for co-teaching to be successful, there must be a shared understanding of what co-teaching is and is not (Kinne et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2010). Without an understanding of the model and buy-in for co-teaching implementation, neither the mentor teacher nor the teacher candidate is likely to benefit.

A second recommendation is to examine the definition of mentoring EPPs use with their mentor teachers. If EPPs want mentor teachers to provide guidance on issues of school policy, procedures, and professionalism, then mentoring can be superficial and probably does not require additional training. Mentor teachers in this case are likely to report rather than analyze what they see (Clarke et al., 2014). However, if EPPs see the role of mentor teacher as one that involves instructional coaching and educative mentoring where mentor teachers provide feedback to adult learners and help teacher candidates understand the why, how, what, and when of teaching (Ambrosetti et al.,

2014; Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Pylman, 2016, 2018; Stanulis et al., 2018), then EPPs must investigate innovative ways to train mentor teachers given the time, financial constraints, and policies that may have to be negotiated so mentor teachers get the supports they need.

A third recommendation is to examine the role of training versus mindset in mentor teachers. In this study, a mentor teacher who demonstrated a developmental mindset but had received no training was able to learn from her experience as a mentor, while another with training but an instrumental mindset struggled to gain anything from the experience. This investigation of the role of mindset and training begun by Goodwin et al. (2016) should be studied in the context of co-teaching.

A final recommendation is a study that focuses on closing the feedback loop for mentor teachers. By providing feedback on and supports for mentor teachers in their role, they could have the opportunity to learn and improve their mentoring practice. As long as no feedback is provided to mentor teachers, they will continue to learn through trial and error or repeat the same practices rather than learn and grow in their mentoring and coaching skills.

Implications

The primary impact this study has for social change is its potential to improve the cycle of learning for both mentor teachers and teacher candidates. Currently, the benefits of hosting a teacher candidate are largely reaped by teacher candidates and EPPs. Teacher candidates are taught pedagogy, but a large part of teaching is about collaboration and communication with colleagues, which involves andragogy. Good teachers are not necessarily good mentor teachers because additional skills and knowledge are needed to

be effective in the role (Ambrosetti, 2014). EPPs and districts must work together in mutually beneficial partnerships to prepare teacher candidates. Co-teaching does help mentor teachers improve their teaching practices, but additional supports are needed to improve their coaching and mentoring skills.

On the EPP side, CAEP (2013) Standard 2 for the national accreditation of EPPs addresses clinical partnerships and practice. While some EPPs make changes to their programs to provide evidence of this standard for accreditation purposes, there must also be a change at the district level in understanding how student teaching and the mentor teacher's role has changed in an era of accountability. To break the cycle of mentor teachers relying on their own student-teaching experiences or the trial and error of hosting teacher candidates over time, mentor teachers must be given the opportunity to learn other ways of approaching the mentor-teacher role. Knowledge development is less likely to happen unless the teaching team, EPP, and local community of practice work together to provide resources and support (Murphy et al., 2015).

As schools move away from allowing teachers to remain isolated in their classrooms, the skills it takes to become effective mentor teachers can also help districts give teacher leaders the opportunity to learn about working with other adults. These skills are beneficial for peer coaching, professional learning communities, and other collaborative endeavors among teachers that would benefit the larger community of practice. Skills like these provide opportunities for knowledge development that would add to how communities of practice understand competence (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These coaching and mentoring skills are not taught in teacher-preparation courses, which

focus on pedagogy, but are instead taught in courses leading to supervisor or administration certification.

Conclusion

Co-teaching in student teaching provides opportunities for both mentor teachers' and teacher candidates' learning. Mentor teachers are encouraged to allow teacher candidates to make mistakes and learn from failure through a process of guided reflection. If this is a good practice for teacher candidates, why do we lack a structure to allow mentor teachers to learn in the same way? While mentor teachers do benefit in their own teaching practice as they go help teacher candidates learn to teach, there is much work to do in defining the mentor teacher's role, providing supports and training, and offering feedback so mentor teachers can learn from their mistakes and make improvements.

Mentor teachers are busy people and may simply not be aware that the practices and systems within which they work are not ideal. Mentor teachers are often isolated, with only one or two teacher candidates in a school at a given time. Without a larger community of practice for mentor teachers in which they can reflect and learn from each other, teachers will do the best they can to help prepare the next generation of teachers. Unfortunately, they do not know what they do not know. Mentor teachers cannot be blamed for lacking knowledge in coaching and mentoring because it was not part of their teacher training, but those who do know better on the district and EPP levels can help close this gap by working together to educate mentor teachers and provide feedback and supports for improvement. These structures will improve teacher preparation, and the

coaching and mentoring skills learned by mentor teachers can also be used to support novice teachers, which may help improve teacher retention.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

During the following interviews I would like to record what you say so I don't miss any of it. I don't want to take the chance of relying exclusively on my notes and missing something you might say or inadvertently changing your words. If at any time during the interview you would like to stop the recorder, just let me know.

Interview One

I would like you to think about the early part of your educational career.

1. Everyone has a story about why they became a teacher. Tell me your story. Why did you become a teacher?
2. What was your student teaching experience like?
    - What types of things did your mentor do that you consider to be good practice?
3. When thinking about how you got here today, could you elaborate on your educational history up to the point you became a mentor teacher for the first time?
    - Experiences in their own teacher preparation program
    - Work experience as a teacher, how long, what kind of assignments
4. Within every school there is a community of practice. By community of practice, I mean a community of colleagues that work together to get their job done. A community of practice can be formal or informal and is concerned with learning, reflecting, refining their practice, and ensuring new generations of members. Could you tell me a little about the community of practice within your school, subject, or grade level?
5. Could you explain the process by which you were selected to serve as a mentor teacher this semester?
    - (If they volunteered) Why did you volunteer to become a mentor teacher?
6. Before you had your student teacher this semester, what did you think was the role of a mentor teacher?

Interview Two

Now that we talked about your history as a teacher and a little about your learning community, today we are going to discuss the day to day work of what it was like to mentor a teacher candidate this semester. This set of questions is about your daily life as a mentor teacher.

1. In order to help me understand the role of a mentor teacher, could you take me through a typical day as a mentor teacher from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep?
    - When is your first contact with your mentor teacher?
    - How does the morning work in the classroom?
    - What do you do during lunch?
    - What happens during your planning period?
    - What happens after school?
    - How late in the evening are you typically in contact with your teacher candidate?
    - When do you get time to plan with your teacher candidate?
    - How often did you reflect with your teacher candidate?
2. Before the semester started, how prepared did you feel to be a mentor teacher this semester?
    - (If very prepared) How did you learn how to mentor?
    - (If not prepared) Why not?
3. How has mentoring a teacher candidate influenced your own practice as a teacher?
    - What new content or skills have you learned as a teacher?
4. Could you give some examples of specific things you did in your capacity as a mentor teacher that you would not normally do as a teacher?
5. Has the mentor teacher experience left you feeling more prepared to take on additional mentoring or leadership roles at this time? Why or why not?
6. What have you learned about yourself as a mentor during this student teaching experience?
    - In terms of disposition, what characteristics do mentors need to work with a teacher candidate?
    - In terms of content, did you discover information that might help in your work with your teacher candidate such as conflict mediation?
    - In terms of skills, did you learn any strategies that made it easier to work with your teacher candidate?

Interview Three

1. Now that we have had a chance to discuss your everyday work as a mentor teacher and how you got to serve as a mentor teacher, we are going to widen the perspective beyond the individual and organization level and discuss education as a system. You now have insight into how teachers are prepared today and what kind of supports are needed as the next generation of teacher enters the workforce. Thinking about your

role as a mentor teacher beyond your classroom, do you think that your serving as a mentor teacher this semester has had any sort of ripple effect or unintended consequences to your community of practice or beyond?
    - If so, what was it
    - If not, why not?
2. What do you think the role of the mentor teacher is in preparing student teachers today? Has it changed since you became a teacher?
3. How is teaching adult learners different from working with kids?
    - How is working with a teacher candidate different than working with other adults who might be placed in your classroom?
4. What would you do differently next time?
5. What advice would you give to one of your colleagues who might be working with a teacher candidate for the first time or thinking about working with a teacher candidate?

Wrap up

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Of all the things we have discussed over these three interviews, what should I pay most attention to in terms of the mentor teacher experience?

Appendix B: Alignment Matrix

Interview questions	Research Question	Subthemes	Theme
1.1. Everyone has a story about why they became a teacher. Tell me your story. Why did you become a teacher?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Student teaching experience of mentor teacher	Theme 1
1.2. What was your student teaching experience like?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Student teaching experience of mentor teacher • Preparation and training for mentor teacher role	Theme 1
1.3. When thinking about how you got here today, could you elaborate on your educational history up to the point you became a mentor teacher for the first time?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Preparation and training for mentor teacher role • Working with colleagues	Theme 1
1.4. Within every school there is a community of practice. By community of practice, I mean a community of colleagues that work together to get their job done. A community of practice can be formal or informal and is concerned with learning, reflecting, refining their practice, and ensuring new generations of members. Could you tell me a little about the community of practice within your school, subject, or grade level?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Climate and culture • Working with colleagues	Theme 2
1.5. Could you explain the process by which you were selected to serve as a mentor teacher this semester?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Motivation for serving as a mentor teacher	Theme 1

1.6 Before you had your student teacher this semester, what did you think was the role of a mentor teacher?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Student teaching experience of m • Mentor teacher understandings of the role and responsibilities	Theme 1
2.2. Before the semester started, how prepared did you feel to be a mentor teacher this semester?	RQ1- How do mentor teachers describe their initial expectations about their roles in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Preparation and training for mentor teacher role	Theme 1
2.1. In order to help me understand the role of a mentor teacher, could you take me through a typical day as a mentor teacher from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep?	RQ2- How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Reflection on mentor teacher practice· • Reflection on teacher candidate practice • Coaching actions of mentor teachers • Mentoring actions of mentor teachers • Transmission versus transformation • Co-teaching • Planning time	Theme 3
2.3. How has mentoring a teacher candidate influenced your own practice as a teacher?	RQ2- How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Reflection on mentor teacher practice	Theme 3
2.4. Could you give some examples of specific things you did in your capacity as a mentor teacher that you would not normally do as a teacher?	RQ2- How do mentor teachers describe their identity and growth in their mentorship of teacher candidates in a co-teaching model of student teaching?	• Coaching actions of mentor teachers • Mentoring actions of mentor teachers	Theme 3
2.5. Has the mentor teacher experience left you feeling more prepared to take on additional mentoring or leadership roles at this time? Why or why not?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Impacts on Serving as a Mentor Teacher on the Community of Practice	Theme 4

2.6. What have you learned about yourself as a mentor during this student teaching experience?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Role of mentor teacher today • External coaching/mentoring/supervision • Development of coaching/mentoring skills	Theme 4
3.1 Thinking about your role as a mentor teacher beyond your classroom, do you think that your serving as a mentor teacher this semester has had any sort of ripple effect or unintended consequences to your community of practice or beyond?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Impacts on Serving as a Mentor Teacher on the Community of Practice	Theme 4
3.2. What do you think the role of the mentor teacher is in preparing student teachers today? Has it changed since you became a teacher?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Role of mentor teacher today • Student teaching experience of mentor teacher	Theme 4
3.3. How is teaching adult learners different from working with kids?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Andragogy versus pedagogy	Theme 4
3.4. What would you do differently next time?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Development of coaching/mentoring skills • Advice to colleagues	Theme 4
3.5. What advice would you give to one of your colleagues who might be working with a teacher candidate for the first time or thinking about working with a teacher candidate?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Advice to colleagues	Theme 4
Additional Question Is there any area you wish you had more training in now that you have worked with a teacher candidate?	RQ3 How do mentor teachers apply their learning and growth within the larger context of the teaching environment and the teaching profession?	• Areas of difficulty	Theme 4